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HENRY JAMES JOINS THE CRIME CLUB

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This rather frivolous title may at first be something of a shock. We are accustomed to think of Henry James as a meticulous but politely detached observer, interested in delicate shades of character and motives so subtle that the ordinary reader finds himself lost in a mystic maze of ellipsis and suggestion.

It is true that several critics, to their own surprise, have discovered a resemblance between Mr. James and the typical detective-story writer. They point out that, like those who concoct our modern mysteries, he is concerned not so much with what is going to happen as with what has happened and how it happened; that he keeps us constantly in suspense; that he subordinates the creation of character to the analysis of motives and relationships.

So far, however, I believe the comparison has been confined chiefly to method. James, according to those who hail him as a "master detective," uses his sleuthing only on states of mind. Ford Madox Hueffer speaks of "those conflicts of irresolution with irresolution whose only pistol shot is the arriving at a determination," and J. W. Beach, in his discussion of *The Method of Henry James*, comments upon "his way of doling out his information in bits,—just enough each time to keep the reader from deserting, never enough to satisfy or finally enlighten him until the end," adding, "In this method the most subjective of psychological novels are in agreement with the most objective of detective stories."

It is undeniable that the work of James which he himself approved and cared to preserve is almost wholly concerned with psychological analysis, and that this tendency is shown more and more in the later books. While *Roderick Hudson* admitted an interruption to the young sculptor's career in the form of a very tangible temptress, *The Ambassadors* skirts its problem so circumspectly that we are never quite sure of the facts. Action has almost completely given way to atmosphere, and the real dramatis personae of the story are the spiritual entities of Paris and of Woollett, Massachusetts. *The*

Golden Bowl, another of the later novels, has plenty of drama, but it is, again, drama of the mind. In this story of the strangely entangled four—Maggie, daughter of a fabulously wealthy father, married to a prince as fabulously aristocratic, and Charlotte, who by marrying Maggie's father becomes the step-mother-in-law of her former lover—the interest lies in the question, how much does Maggie know, and in the gradual discovery that she knows more than anyone else.

So one might go on through a long line. They are fascinating, these intellectual and emotional problems. They have almost the impersonal interest of a mathematical demonstration, and in that, of course, they show their likeness to the detective story. From Poe down, the manufacturer of mystery tales has thought of his people only as a means to an end, and that end a surprise for his reader by a clever juggling of situations. So with Mr. James's mental mysteries. Beach says, "The form and features, the dress and attitude are transparencies through which shines the light of thought and feeling." But one feels that it is quite often almost disembodied thought and feeling, with sublime indifference to form and features, dress and attitude.

We are so in the habit of associating Henry James with nothing more concrete than states of consciousness that it is with startled surprise that we discover his earlier stories, especially those which he did not care to revive, but left discreetly hidden in magazine files. For these stories reveal a quite different Henry James, one who does not hesitate to use melodrama in its cruder forms and is aware that his people have bodies as well as minds.

These early productions may be considered in three groups: those which introduce some supernatural elements; those which may be called ordinary melodrama without any supernatural machinery; and those in which though they are concerned with melodramatic situations, interest in character seems to be taking a larger place.

One of the earliest of the experiments with supernatural machinery is "The Romance of Certain Old Clothes," published in the *Atlantic* for February, 1868. This tells of two sisters who are in love with the same man. He marries the younger, but she dies when her daughter is born. On her

death-bed she makes him swear an oath to keep the beautiful clothes she had for her trousseau locked in a chest until her daughter is old enough to wear them. Later, the older sister, who has succeeded by clever machinations in marrying him, persuades him to give her the key of the chest. Missing her after a considerable time, he finds her dead, on her knees by the open chest, and "on her bloodless brow and cheeks there glowed the marks of ten hideous wounds from two vengeful ghostly hands."

Not much comment is necessary. There is little differentiation of character between the sisters, except that the older one is unscrupulous in her determination to gain her end. The development of the situation has no suggestion of probability or even plausibility, and there is no indication in the attitude of the younger sister that she would be capable of such savage revenge. Certainly, if the name of Henry James were not attached to it, one would consider this just an ordinary ghost story buried in deserved oblivion.

"De Grey: A Romance," which also appeared in the *Atlantic* in July of the same year, has a somewhat more complicated but equally melodramatic theme. Mrs. De Grey is a middle-aged woman rich and apparently happy, but from the beginning of the story we are conscious that she is haunted by some mysterious worry. In the absence of her son, who is traveling in Europe, she takes into her house a young girl, Margaret Aldis. Paul, the son, returns. The girl whom he was engaged to marry has died, and he becomes engaged to Margaret, confessing to her that he has never loved his former fiancée. Then Margaret learns the secret of the family. In the past a young man refused to give up the girl he loved when he was stricken with the plague. She died and he recovered. Her brother put a curse on the family—that the first love of the heir should always die. Margaret defies the curse, but by so doing shifts it to her lover, who sickens and dies. In her remorse at Paul's death, she loses her mind.

Here again we have much of the clap-trap of "Gothic" romance. The improbable situation of the young man's endangering the girl he loves, the unquestioning acceptance of the curse by modern minds,—all this is pretty obvious and unsatisfying. There is a little more attempt at establishment of

character distinction, however, in Margaret's determination to pit her will against supernatural powers; and an atmosphere of mystery and foreboding is suggested, fairly well, throughout the story.

The most effective of the tales of this type, it seems to me, is "The Ghostly Rental," in *Scribner's* for September, 1876. This is told in the first person, a method which became rather characteristic of Henry James. While in most of these first person stories the narrator has more or less connection with the story, he is usually created in Mr. James's own image.

In "The Ghostly Rental" a young theological student, walking in the neighborhood of Cambridge, Massachusetts, sees a house, the mysterious appearance of which suggests that it is haunted. As he stands looking at it, an old man in antiquated dress approaches, makes a bow before opening the door, and goes in. After a time he comes out, bows again, and goes away. Later, the young man meets this same person in Mt. Auburn cemetery and gets into conversation with him. The subject of ghosts comes up, and the old man, who has given his name as Captain Diamond, says he knows ghosts exist, for he has seen one. The young man asks a woman at his board-house, who knows everything about everybody, what she knows of Captain Diamond, and she finally tells him the story:

Captain Diamond had a daughter who fell in love with a young man not acceptable to her father. One night he found the man with her; he cursed his daughter and went away, leaving her in a swoon. When he returned, he found a note from the lover saying that the daughter was dead and that he had carried her body away to bury it, as she was his wife. The ghost of the daughter began to haunt the house. The father tried to sell or rent it, but did not succeed, for it had gained the reputation of being haunted. Finally, the ghost said she would hire the house and pay rent, and every quarter the old man went there to collect it.

When the old man discovers that the younger one knows his story, he takes him to the house and lets him have a glimpse of the ghost. Later, when he falls ill, he sends for the student and asks him to go for him to collect the rent. The young man enters the house and, after waiting for a while, sees a ghostly figure come down the stairs. He pursues it and

discovers that it is a human being. She throws the purse on the floor and runs away, but comes back screaming that she has seen her father. When the young man tells her that her father is ill, she is sure that he has died and she has seen his ghost. The narrator asks her:

“Had he not forgiven you?”

“So long as he thought me dead, yes. There have been things in my life he could not forgive.”

I hesitated, and then—“And where is your husband?” I asked.

“I have no husband—I have never had a husband.”

The young man takes the money to the captain's house and finds him dead. The woman has asked him to leave a note for her under the stone by the well, but when he goes there to fulfill his promise the house has burned down, probably from the candle she dropped in her fright at her father's apparition, and in the débris it is impossible to find the stone.

It is not difficult to pick flaws in this. Certainly the plot has little relation to actualities. It is glaringly improbable that the father should accept the vanishing of his daughter's body so casually. He would know that some arrangements must be made for burial, and curiosity, even if there were no lingering of fatherly affection, would cause him to investigate them. There are “leads” in the story which have no point. For instance, why did the young man not marry the girl after taking her away from her father's house? Was he merely a fortune hunter? If so, and if the father was justified in his disapproval, would the girl have kept up this cruel revenge upon him for years? A faithless lover introduces an entirely new complication which has nothing to do with the main theme of the story. Also, the woman in the boarding-house who enlightens the young man says that something awful will happen to anyone who repeats the story: but nothing happens, apparently, to her. Why introduce this meaningless detail? Even a novice is usually more careful about loose ends.

But the story as a whole does have atmosphere. The lonely house, which draws the young observer back to it like a magnet, the old man in the costume of an earlier time, making

his remorseful pilgrimage, the suspense before the ghostly figure appears and the purse of gold falls upon the floor,—all this has its effect in spite of the many weaknesses. The main situation, the revengeful daughter masquerading as a ghost to punish her unjust father, would be a strong one if the motive behind it had sufficient power.

A nearer approach to James's later methods is "The Last of the Valerii," in the *Atlantic* for January, 1874, in which a Juno of Praxiteles is dug up in the garden of a young Italian count. He goes back to the paganism of his ancestors and worships it, until his wife, who realizes that their marriage is being destroyed, has the statue buried again. Then he returns to normal life. Here we have a more subtle use of the supernatural, a psychic influence due to the stored up power of former experience, suggestive of James's later and more effective productions like *The Sense of the Past* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

Stories which make use of rather sensational material without recourse to any supernatural happenings are found in early numbers of the *Atlantic*, *Scribner's*, *The Galaxy*, and the *English Illustrated Magazine*. Two characteristic examples are "Master Eustace" in *The Galaxy*, November, 1871, and "Guest's Confession" in the *Atlantic*, October, 1872.

"Master Eustace" is told in a rather awkward variation of the first person manner by a woman as she hands a man visitor a cup of tea. She has been the paid companion of Mrs. Garnyer, a young widow with an only son, Eustace. Mrs. Garnyer's husband has been dissipated and uncongenial. Eustace grows up and goes on a long journey. Mr. Cope, with whom Mrs. Garnyer has corresponded for years, returns from India and marries her. She expects Eustace to be delighted, as he and Mr. Cope have been friendly; but he comes back raging with jealousy. He tries unsuccessfully to kill himself, and his mother dies from the shock of his behavior. He learns that Mr. Cope is really his father, but he is never reconciled to him.

The surprise of the climax is fairly well kept here. As in most of these stories, the interest lies entirely in the situation; almost any people might be used to work it out.

"Guest's Confession" tells of two step-brothers, one sick-

ly and disagreeable, the other attractive and the richer of the two. The weaker brother, Edgar, loses twenty thousand dollars through Mr. Guest's dishonesty and makes him, at the suggestion of the step-brother, David, write a confession. Meanwhile David has fallen in love with Guest's daughter, not knowing the relationship. Edgar, the sickly brother, dies, and the complication is finally resolved when David burns the confession in the presence of Guest and his daughter. Guest forgives him and accepts him as a son-in-law.

Others of this type that might be mentioned are "A Light Man" (*Galaxy*, July 1869); "Longstaff's Marriage" (*Scribner's*, August 1878); "Osborne's Revenge" (*Galaxy*, July 1868); and "A Problem" (*Galaxy*, June 1868). None of these are particularly strong in plot, but such interest as they do have turns on situation rather than character.

The stories in which character—or at any rate motive for action—plays a more prominent role are for the most part later. Perhaps the earliest of any importance is "Crawford's Consistency," which appeared in *Scribner's* for August, 1876. Crawford falls in love with Elizabeth Ingram, who is a distant cousin of his closest friend. Her mother thinks Crawford not quite wealthy enough, but finally consents. Two or three weeks before the time set for the wedding, the engagement is broken off; Elizabeth tells Crawford she was mistaken, she did not love him. The two young men visit a concert-garden one night, and notice a coarse, rather showily handsome woman. Crawford remains and gets into conversation with her. The friend is out of town for a few weeks; when he returns, he finds that Crawford has married the woman. He shows no sign of disturbance, though all his friends think the situation is impossible. Elizabeth, meanwhile, has become engaged to a rich young Alabama planter. Crawford loses most of his money in a bank failure, and his wife grows more and more insulting to him. Finally, in a quarrel, she pushes him down some steps and breaks his leg. Ten years later, she dies of delirium tremens. Elizabeth Ingram has small-pox, and loses her beauty and her lover—a sort of retribution in which the later James rarely indulges. Crawford never, through his poverty and his apparent humiliation, loses his equanimity. This certainly goes to the extreme in the direction of illogical

and sensational behavior. The character interest, such as it is, lies in Crawford's imperturbable attitude and the puzzlement it causes his friends.

Other examples of this type are "The Path of Duty," *English Illustrated Magazine*, December 1885; "The Pupil," *Longman's*, March and April 1891; and "The Author of Beltraffio," which first appeared in the *English Illustrated Magazine* in June and July, 1884. These last two the author cared enough about to reprint in his revised edition. "The Author of Beltraffio" has a genuine psychological situation between a famous author and his wife, who has such a horror of his work that she lets their child die for fear of the father's influence upon him.

It has been necessary to summarize these stories somewhat in detail, in order to establish the point that James, in his earlier work, used the material as well as the methods of the more sensational writers. Moreover, two of his books, now little known, go even further in this direction, though they belong to a later period. These are *The Other House*, published in 1896, and *The Outcry*, in 1909. *The Outcry*, it is true, is concerned with an artistic problem, the genuineness of a painting; but it includes such melodramatic complications as a "villainness" who is disgracing her aristocratic family with gambling debts, and a scheming lady who is trying to cheat an American millionaire into buying a portrait of her great-grandmother.

The Other House is most striking in its use of sensational material. Here the "villainness," Rose Armiger, is Machiavelian in her cold-blooded scheming. When Tony Bream's wife, on her deathbed, wants him to promise not to marry again, Rose persuades him to swear that he will not marry "during the life of his daughter." Four years later, when she finds that he is becoming interested in another woman, she deliberately drowns the child and tries to throw suspicion upon the girl with whom Tony is in love. Her plan is circumvented by the testimony of the man to whom she herself has been engaged, and at the end this man, disillusioned and horrified, is waiting to take her away from the scene of the crime, which the doctor, most unprofessionally, is helping to cover up.

Beach questions whether *The Other House* may have been

written as a "pot-boiler," since he considers the material "so far from being characteristic" of Henry James. However, we have seen that the earlier stories have a tendency to emphasize violent and even criminal action, and this tendency persists in the later work. In the novel which Mr. James left unfinished, *The Ivory Tower*, he apparently intended the trusted friend to take advantage of the hero's inexperience in business matters and get possession not only of his fortune but of his lady. In *The Other House* he is treating his material more directly and baldly, with emphasis upon action rather than upon traits of character which make such action possible. But if the book was written in a deliberate attempt to make money, it must have been a disappointment, for it seems to have attracted little attention.

Mr. Beach's idea that a theme of this sort was out of character for Henry James is contradicted by a comment of Percy Lubbock's: "Mr. Roughead . . . had sent H. J. some literature of a kind in which he always took a keen interest—the literature of crime."¹ The interest mentioned here seems to make plausible a theory quite different from Mr. Beach's: that James in the beginning really wanted to write stories of action, of dramatic conflict, and that he found himself less and less able to do this as life went on. This theory is strengthened by the fact that he tried, repeatedly, to write a successful play, and was much disappointed by his failure.

Reasons for his failure in both these directions are not far to seek. In the first place, as Ford Madox Hueffer says, he "never went down town." It is impossible not to feel that the boyhood of Henry James, sheltered, lived as Van Wyck Brooks shows in the shadow of Europe, gave a definite set to his personality. From the very beginning he was detached from the actual life around him; he saw it in perspective, all possibility of annoying contacts carefully removed. He said to himself, "reading tends to take for me the place of experience—or rather to *become* itself (pour qui sait lire) experience concentrated."² The crime that fascinated him, as well as other forms of action, came, as we have seen, through the medium of another person's observation.

¹ *Letters of Henry James*, II, 327.

² *Ibid.*

Not that it is necessary for writers of criminal literature to frequent the jails and the police courts. Few of those who are pouring out detective stories today have murderers and thieves among their intimates, and just as few, probably, are accustomed to see blood flow. Stevenson on his sick-bed is the triumphant illustration of vicarious adventure. But in order to write stories of action, one must be interested not only in people but in what they do. One needs only to compare the letters of Stevenson with those of Henry James, to know why one and not the other went on the search for buried treasure.

Both, of course, were literary men; even in familiar correspondence they showed less interest, at times, in the communication than in the communicating phrase. But Stevenson has a certain zestful approach to externals that one seldom finds in James. Stevenson, on his tropical island, threw himself into the problems of the natives, and became an arbiter in their disputes. James, in his beloved Europe, could write: "I have been nearly a year in Italy and have hardly spoken to an Italian creature save washerwomen and waiters."³ And again, although he has just written, "I feel now more at home in London than anywhere else in the world," he adds, "I have, however, formed no intimacies—not even close acquaintances. I incline to believe that I have passed the age when one forms friendships; or that everyone else has."⁴ This when he had reached the age of thirty-four.

Stevenson himself made a discerning criticism of James's work when he said, ". . . he treats, for the most part, statics of character," and goes on to remark that in "The Author of Bentraffio" ". . . strong passion is indeed employed; but observe that it is not displayed. . . . the great struggle, the true tragedy, the scène-à-faire, passes unseen behind the panels of a locked door."

In view of this it is interesting that Mr. James's own explanation of the aims of fiction is "catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life." It is interesting, too, that when he tries to bring the action out from behind the locked door, he is less effective. He catches the "strange irregular rhythm" of men's thoughts and feelings, but the

³ *Letters*, I, 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

trick of action is not his. And this again goes back to his personality. As we read of Henry James's life, we seldom find him doing things. We find him sojourning, now here, now there, always a traveler, always an observer, trying to feel "atmosphere," looking at the life around him as if it were a play, the play that he never succeeded in writing. It is not at all strange that he failed there, where action is imperative.

It is no wonder, also, that when, in those early stories which we have been considering, he did try to set external forces at work, he often went too far. Unaccustomed to violence, or, indeed, to any sort of direct and decisive action, he found one type of behavior not much more improbable than another. When he got away from mental activity, he found himself in a world where he was a stranger.

One may speculate as to what might have happened if Mr. James had lived somewhat later. In recent years the mystery story has spread out over all sorts of fields, has made use of many varieties of science and pseudo-science, has scrutinized motives and temperaments as well as blood spots and finger-prints. It is not impossible that Henry James might have done what Dorothy Sayers and some others are doing today; he might have used his learning and his culture in the service of his natural bent toward ingenious problems. He might have become the outstanding detective-story writer of his time, and so have reaped the money harvest he had hoped his dramatic ventures might bring.

ISOLATION IN RECENT GERMAN LITERATURE

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In any literary epoch one may find evidence of the isolation of the writer from society. Representing and extolling life makes it difficult to participate in it at the same time; dwelling in the realm of ideas isolates the individual from the human companionship of the market. Poets as well as the writers of prose are therefore apt to feel isolated from their society, no matter in what era they live. Their feeling of isolation, however, varies in intensity with literary epochs. It is certainly not dominant in the German Classical Age, nor is it typical of German literature of the middle of the nineteenth century. It does appear in the foreground in the Romantic Age, and in the Storm and Stress. In German literature of the last fifty years, however, it plays a decisive part.

Before we go into the possible reasons for this phenomenon, let us give a brief survey of the problem of isolation in recent German literature. We find it in its typical form first in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Zarathustra's home is lonesomeness, as he says in the third part, in *The Return Home*: "O lonesomeness! my *home*, lonesomeness! Too long have I lived wildly in wild remoteness, to return to thee without tears!"¹

And the equivalent of Zarathustra's lonesomeness is that of his creator Nietzsche, who found him "6000 feet above the humans," in the lonesome Engadine. Lonesomeness is more than solitude; Nietzsche is not simply alone, he also longs for company. One of the recurrent themes in his biography by his sister Elisabeth is this his longing for companions, and his black despair when even the best friends failed to understand him. The superficial reader obtains an impression of Zarathustra as a scornful and proud sage who refuses to have any dealings with the herd. A more patient and leisurely reader

¹ *The Complete Works*, ed. by Oscar Levy, Vol. XI, p. 223, translated by Commons, Macmillan.

O. Einsamkeit! Du meine *Heimat* Einsamkeit! Zu lange lebte ich wild in wilder Fremde, als dass ich nicht mit Tränen zu dir heimkehrte! (*Kröners Taschenausgabe*, Band 75, p. 202.)

will find Zarathustra a very lonesome, pathetic wise man, who feels attracted to the valley, who wants to preach to the people in the lowlands, but who despairs of their shallowness, greed, and pettiness. A line from *The Wanderer* at the beginning of the third part could be considered the motto of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: "Thus spake Zarathustra to himself while ascending, comforting his heart with harsh maxims: for he was sore at heart as he had never been before."²

Nietzsche is harsh out of love, not out of hate; and it is of great importance to remember that. For some critics of bourgeois society are so much like the fool, "the ape of Zarathustra," in the chapter *On Passing-By*, also in the third part. He foams and curses at the big city, its putrid, tepid, frothy blood ". . . where everything maimed, ill-famed, lustful, untrustful, over-mellow, sickly-yellow and seditious, festereth pernicious: —"³ And he turns to Zarathustra with the warning "Spit on the great city and turn back!" Zarathustra answers him, and his beautiful answer tells how much Nietzsche belongs to this world, how inadequate it is to see in him merely the critic. "Why didst thou live so long by the swamp, that thou thyself hadst to become a frog and a toad? Floweth there not a tainted, frothy, swamp-blood in thine own veins, when thou hast thus learned to croak and revile? Why wentest thou not into the forest? Or why didst thou not till the ground? Is the sea not full of green islands?"⁴

To see in Nietzsche's life and work the discord between genuine and warm human love for the world and its inhabitants, and scorn and contempt for their inadequateness, is to understand isolation in modern German literature. The English word isolation, however, is not quite exact because it simply states the fact, but not the reaction of the writer. *Sepa-*

² *Op. cit.*, p. 185. Also sprach Zarathustra im Steigen zu sich, mit harten Sprüchlein sein Herz tröstend: denn er war wund am Herzen wie noch niemals zuvor. (*op. cit.*, p. 168.)

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 215 f. ". . . wo alles Anbrüchige, Anrühige, Lusterne, Düstere, Übermürbe, Geschwürige, Verschwörerische, zusammenschwärt:—" (*op. cit.*, p. 196.)

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 216. "Warum wohntest du so lange am Sumpfe, dass du selber zum Frosch und zur Kröte werden musstest? Fließt dir nicht selber nun ein faulichtes schaumichtes Sumpf-Blut durch die Adern, dass du also quaken und lästern lerntest? Warum gingst du nicht in den Wald? Oder pflügtest die Erde? Ist das Meer nicht voll von grünen Eilanden?" (*op. cit.*, p. 196.)

rateness might be more accurate in rendering the German word *Abgelöstheit* which is used in the study on which this essay is based.⁵

In recent German literature the writer is aware of his isolation from society because he desires a place in it. All his statements of isolation are fraught with emotion. They are bitter complaints—either about himself for being unable to join the group, or about the group for being so far from his ideal of man.

The self-critical attitude of the writer results in a great number of works dealing with poets or artists as heroes. Among the better known works, the following deal with poets, writers and artists: Hermann Bahr, *The Concert*; Arthur Schnitzler, *Anatol*, *Intermezzo*, *The Lonely Way*—and many others; Gerhart Hauptmann, *Colleague Crampton*, *Michael Kramer*, *The Sunken Bell*, *Wanda*, *Gabriel Schilling's Flight* and others; Thomas Mann, *Tonio Kröger*, *Tristan*, *Death in Venice*, *The Infant Prodigy*, *Fiorenza*, *A Weary Hour* (Thomas Mann's Schiller-Novelle) and his most recent *Lotte in Weimar*, not yet translated, to name only a few of a great many. Of these, Thomas Mann's story *Tonio Kröger* deserves closer examination. Not only does it contain the quintessence of the self-criticism so typical of all contemporary works dealing with artists and writers; it is also very typical of Thomas Mann's entire work, because it contains the bourgeois-artist antinomy which runs through all of his productions; and Thomas Mann, in his *A Sketch of My Life*, confesses how this story, of everything he wrote, may stand closest to his heart.

Tonio Kröger, Like Thomas Mann, belongs to the bourgeoisie by upbringing and by inclination. But his art, his writing, isolates him from society. He confesses to his Russian painter friend Lisabeta Ivanovna how he feels that it is a curse to produce literature, a curse which is felt early in life. "It begins by your feeling yourself set apart, in a curious sort

⁵ This author, *Der deutsche Dichter um die Jahrhundertwende und seine Abgelöstheit von der Gesellschaft* Berne 1939, 287 pp. Sprache und Dichtung, Heft 66.

Cf. this study for bibliography and more detailed references. The German works are here quoted in the English translation, if listed in B. Q. Morgan's *Critical Bibliography of German Literature in English Translation 1481-1935*, 1938.

of opposition to the nice, regular people; there is a gulf of ironic sensibility, of knowledge, scepticism, disagreement, between you and the others; it grows deeper and deeper, you realize that you are alone; and from then on any *rapprochement* is simply hopeless!"⁶

Like Tonio, writers and artists in recent German literature are marked by their feeling of separateness from the group. They lead *Lonely Lives*, like the characters in one of Hauptmann's early plays by that title. Lonesomeness becomes one of the predominant themes of literature. Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *The Fool and Death* is a gentle lament over the vanity of life which is not connected with humanity. The Fool says:

What do I know then of the life of man?
Of course I've always stood about in it
But at the best I've comprehended it,
Into it I could never weave myself.
And never did I lose myself in it.
Where other men receive, where others give,
I always stand apart, born dumb in soul.⁷

The standing apart in Tonio Kröger's complaint, it is a recurrent theme in the poetry of young Rilke, we find it in Hofmannsthal's work as well as in that of Stefan George. The most outstanding works of the era depict a problem of isolation from society in one form or another. Rainer Maria

⁶ *Stories of Three Decades*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter, New York 1936, Alfred A. Knopf, p. 104.

Sie fangen an, sich gezeichnet, sich in einem rätselhaften Gegensatz zu den anderen, den Gewöhnlichen, den Ordentlichen zu fühlen, der Abgrund von Ironie, Unglaube, Opposition, Erkenntnis, Gefühl, der sie von den Menschen trennt, klappt tiefer und tiefer, Sie sind einsam, und fortan gibt es keine Verständigung mehr. (*Gesammelte Werke, Novellen*, II, p. 36.)

⁷ From the translation by Herbert Edward Mierow, *Colorado College Publication*, General Series No. 172, p. 16 f.

Was weiss denn ich vom Menschenleben?
Bin freilich scheinbar drin gestanden,
Aber ich hab es höchstens verstanden,
Konnte mich nie darein verweben.
Hab mich niemals daran verloren.
Wo andre nehmen, andre geben,
Blieb ich beiseit, im Innern stummgeboren.

(*Ges. Werke in drei Bänden*, Berlin 1934, Erster Band, erster Teil, p. 135.)

Rilke's great novel *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge* is the diary of a young Dane living in Paris, in almost superhuman solitude, who tries to discover for himself why he must stand apart;⁸ Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, in the fate of Hanno, shows isolation through decadence; his *Magic Mountain* presents us with a young *Bürger*, isolated from his group and confronted with the great problems of love and death—without the help of the bourgeois tradition. *Joseph and his Brothers* is the story of the man who through his superiority was isolated from his brothers and his people and who, alone in a strange country, must face the challenge of love and of foreign gods.⁹ Hugo von Hofmannsthal's comedy *Der Schwierige*, perhaps his masterpiece, has for its hero an Austrian count whose sensitivity sets him apart from the crowd around him, and who, comparable to Thomas Mann's *Royal Highness*, finds human warmth, peace, and a feeling of belonging through the love of a woman.

As a result of the writer's isolation he feels a contrast between living and working. That is why discussions of remuneration are avoided: the writer has no established function in his society and it is therefore highly problematic whether he is entitled to a material reward. The writer also is the man who uses his experience as the material for his work and who for that reason does not belong among the real living people around him. A classical example for this conflict of life and art is found in Heinrich Mann's famous *Novelle, Pippo Spano*, in many respects the counterpart to his brother's *Tonio Kröger*. The hero in *Pippo Spano*, Mario Malvolto, is a writer who vows to die by his own hand, together with his mistress. When he has killed her he realizes that his love for her was not genuine, that he was only acting to furnish himself with material for his writing. Tonio Kröger recognizes the same isolation as the *sine qua non* of the true artist. "The artist must be unhuman, extra-human; he must stand in a queer aloof relationship to our humanity; only so is he in a position, I should say only

⁸ Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* also deal with the problem of solitude.

⁹ *Lotte in Weimar* depicts the great isolation of Goethe from his times.

so would he be tempted, to represent it, to present it, to portray it to good effect."¹⁰

The writer in this conception becomes the twin brother of the actor—as Hofmannsthal has put it in the prologue to the *Death of Titian*—his life has as little reality as that of the actor on the stage. From this conception to that of the artist as impostor is but one step; Thomas Mann has made his contribution to the literature about impostors with *Felix Krull*. His Joseph shows traits of this same pleasure in make-believe and posing. Carl Zuckmayer has written a successful play about the most famous impostor of pre-war Germany, *The Captain of Köpenick*. In Hofmannsthal's work there are a number of adventurers. Gerhart Hauptmann's *Peter Brauer* only poses as painter. Several of Jakob Wassermann's characters are posing, although their creator does not present them as impostors.

The poetry of young Rilke is full of complaints about his isolation, many of Hofmannsthal's characters suffer from their separateness, Thomas Mann's characters often accept their isolation with grace and humor, Stefan George makes isolation from the "market" his program and is proud to be apart from the mediocrity of his times. But while the attitudes toward isolation differ greatly individually, the fact of isolation is a common denominator of recent German literature. One of the most common symbols for this isolation is the island. A magazine founded in 1899 by Bierbaum, Heymel, Schröder, and one of whose contributors is Hugo von Hofmannsthal, is called *Die Insel*, and the publishing house connected with it later became one of the leading publishing firms of Germany—the publishers of Carossa, Hofmannsthal, and Rilke, whose *Coronet* was the first and most successful of the small *Insel-Bücher*.¹¹

In the foreword to the newly founded *Insel* magazine, the writers connected with it announced that they wanted to re-

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 103. Es ist nötig, dass man irgend etwas Aussermenschliches und Unmenschliches sei, dass man zum Menschlichen in einem seltsam fernen und unbeteiligten Verhältnis stehe, um imstande und überhaupt versucht zu sein, es zu spielen, damit zu spielen, es wirksam und geschmackvoll darzustellen. (*op. cit.*, p. 34.)

¹¹ In 1937, 550,000 copies of it had been sold. Cf. the enlightening booklet *Die Insel-Bücherei 1912-1937*.

tire into a "beautiful distant island existence" and to build up an oasis of beauty. This picture is not only descriptive of the work of the *Insel* group but of wider circles of literature. It describes most of the work done under the leadership of George in the *Blätter für die Kunst*. It applies to Heinrich Mann's work in the first years of the new century as well as to Rilke's early poetry. It even describes some of Hauptmann's and Wedekind's dramas. The island *motiv* is the basis for Rilke's early drama *Die weisse Fürstin* and many poems, for Hauptmann's *Gabriel Schilling's Flight*, for Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. An island or an island-like situation is attractive to the writer because it is symbolic of his isolation from the continent of bourgeois normalcy. Surrounded as it is by water, the symbol of the infinite,¹² the island is further symbolic of the metaphysical character of the literature of isolation. The man living on an island is constantly brought in contact with the problem of existence—he is surrounded by a deadly element. In the same way the isolated human being constantly faces the problem "To be or not to be": no group keeps awake his will to live. Reference to islands is therefore found very frequently. But even where no specific mention of an island is made, the life of the writer as well as that of his figures takes place in the psychological climate of the island: The sanatorium in *The Magic Mountain* is such an island as well as Titian's estate in Hofmannsthal's *The Death of Titian*, Brigge's Paris room in Rilke's *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*, the castles of Duino and of Muzot where Rilke conceived the elegies, George's *Verwunschener Garten*.

We said that isolation has two sides: the self-critical loneliness of the poet and his critical attitude toward society. Although most writers lament their isolation, they see no way to social integration because their society appears worthless to them. Recent German literature therefore is full of accusations, scornful parodies, flaming condemnations of the *Bürger*, the bourgeois, the city-dweller, the capitalist, the philistine. Again it is Friedrich Nietzsche who has set the example. Zarathustra's words about the last man contain most of the criticism levelled against middle-class culture.

¹² Thomas Mann, in *Lübeck als geistige Lebensform*, makes this observation.

Lo! I show you the last man.

"What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?"—so asketh the last man and blinketh.

The earth hath then become small, and on it there hoppeth the last man who maketh everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the groundflea: the last man liveth longest.

"We have discovered happiness"—say the last men, and blink thereby.

They have left the regions where it is hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loveth one's neighbour and rubbeth against him; for one needeth warmth.

Turning ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful: they walk warily. He is a fool who still stumbleth over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that maketh pleasant dreams. And much poison at last for a pleasant death.

One still worketh, for work is a pastime. But one is careful lest the pastime should hurt one.

One no longer becometh poor or rich: both are too burdensome. Who still wanteth to rule? Who still wanteth to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, and one herd! Every one wanteth the same; every one is equal: he who hath other sentiments goeth voluntarily into the madhouse.

"Formerly all the world was insane,"—say the subtlest of them, and blink thereby.

They are clever and know all that hath happened: so there is no end to their raillery. People still fall out, but are soon reconciled—otherwise it spoileth their stomachs.

They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night: but they have a regard for health.

"We have discovered happiness"—say the last men, and blink thereby.¹³

¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 12 f.

Seht! Ich zeige euch den letzten Menschen.

"Was ist Liebe? Was ist Schöpfung? Was ist Sehnsucht? Was ist Stern?"—so fragt der letzte Mensch und blinzelt.

Die Erde ist dann klein geworden, und auf ihr hüpfet der letzte Mensch, der alles klein macht. Sein Geschlecht ist unaustilgbar wie der Erdflöh; der letzte Mensch lebt am längsten.

"Wir haben das Glück erfunden"—sagen die letzten Menschen und blinzeln.

It is typical of the German character that most of the criticism is directed at the spiritual and intellectual weaknesses of the bourgeois rather than at his economic privileges. Gerhart Hauptmann's *Weavers*, often misinterpreted as a social drama, is no exception to this rule. Hauptmann pleads the case of the Silesian weavers as of people who are in danger of losing their faith in God because circumstances press them so hard. Only blind addicts of the "social significance" school of thought could interpret his plea as a call to arms against the injustices of the capitalistic system, "for Hauptmann is neither a socialist nor a social reformer."¹⁴

From the very beginning Hauptmann's work deals with human beings rather than types, and it is significant that his reformers are impractical dreamers. *Before Dawn*, Hauptmann's first appearance on the stage in 1889, may have been meant to be a social drama. But essentially it is the story of Alfred Loth and Helene—of the reformer who falls in love with a victim of social conditions. And the reformer is so adolescent, so intransigent in his insistence on his principles of health, that he gives the woman up when he finds that she belongs to a family of dipsomaniacs. What social criticism there may be in *Before Dawn* is completely overshadowed by

Sie haben die Gegenden verlassen, wo es hart war zu leben: denn man braucht Wärme. Man liebt noch den Nachbar und reibt sich an ihm: denn man braucht Wärme.

Krank-werden und Misstrauen-haben gilt ihnen sündhaft: man geht achtsam einher. Ein Tor, der noch über Steine oder Menschen stolpert!

Ein wenig Gift ab und zu: das macht angenehme Träume. Und viel Gift zuletzt, zu einem angenehmen Sterben.

Man arbeitet noch, denn Arbeit ist eine Unterhaltung. Aber man sorgt, dass die Unterhaltung nicht angreife.

Man wird nicht mehr arm und reich; beides ist zu beschwerlich. Wer will noch regieren? Wer noch gehorchen? Beides ist zu beschwerlich.

Kein Hirt und eine Herde! Jeder will das gleiche, jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig ins Irrenhaus.

"Ehemals war alle Welt irre"—sagen die Feinsten und blinzeln.

Man ist klug und weiss alles, was geschehen ist: so hat man kein Ende zu spotten. Man zankt sich noch, aber man versöhnt sich bald—sonst verdirbt es den Magen.

Man hat sein Lüstchen für den Tag und sein Lüstchen für die Nacht: aber man ehrt die Gesundheit.

"Wir haben das Glück erfunden"—sagen die letzten Menschen und blinzeln.—(*op. cit.*, p. 14 f.)

¹⁴ Camillo von Klenze, *From Goethe to Hauptmann*, Studies in a Changing Culture, New York 1926, p. 274.

the human drama. Where Hauptmann directs himself against society it is always against its human inadequacy, its smallness, qualities which sometimes he finds represented in a dogmatic narrow conception of Christianity. In other works—*The Fool in Christ*, *Emanuel Quint* is the most outstanding—he feels a lack of spiritual values in his times and preaches the gospel of Christ to the philistines.

One of the most merciless critics of the *Bürger* is Thomas Mann's older brother Heinrich. He hates the falseness, greed, and selfishness of the bourgeois with an intensity that betrays his interest, his feeling of responsibility for this group. In his trilogy *Das Kaiserreich* as well as in his early *In the Land of the Cockaigne* he has given caricatures of the pre-war German bourgeois which can only be matched by some of Sternheim's short plays or stories. Heinrich Mann, one of the most active enemies of national socialism, in his scorn and hate for the bourgeois displays the same intransigence as Stefan George, the venerated visionary of the *dritte Reich*. The extreme left and the extreme right have their hatred for the middle in common. It is revealing to compare Heinrich Mann and Stefan George in the light of recent developments in Germany. Hatred for the bourgeois form of life may very well be the common bond uniting the members of a movement that claims to be both socialist and national.

Some of the criticism of the *Bürger* takes the form of glorification of the criminal.¹⁵ Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* is a step in this direction. Gerhart Hauptmann's *Rose Bernd* is a murderess, his Mother Wolffen in *The Beaver Coat* and in *Conflagration* a thief and an incendiary. In many post-war plays and novels the criminal is the hero—Alfred Döblin's *Alexanderplatz, Berlin*, and Bert Brecht's *Dreigroschenoper* and *Dreigroschenroman* are good representatives—and his main merit is his isolation from the society of the respectable bourgeois which to the writer seemed doomed. Salvation is not likely to come from one within the group; rather from one who stands outside, who has been ostracized. Stefan George has expressed it in a "Jahrhundertspruch":

¹⁵ A doctoral dissertation is under way at Northwestern University treating the criminal in recent German literature.

The man! the deed! Thus folk and leaders sigh.
 Hope not for one who at your tables ate!
 But he who sat long years with murderers,
 And slept in jails, might rise and do the deed.¹⁶

It is interesting to note in passing that of the prominent writers in recent German literature only Thomas Mann has openly confessed his love for the bourgeois. His isolation therefore has a voluntary, ironic character, and when he chastises the bourgeoisie it is done in the spirit of teasing a beloved friend about his weaknesses. The most eloquent passage bearing out this point stands at the end of *Tonio Kröger*: Tonio Kröger writes to Lisaveta that he does not envy the proud cold beings who call him phlegmatic and without aspirations.

For if anything is capable of making a poet of a literary man, it is my *bourgeois* love of the human, the living and usual. It is the source of all warmth, goodness, and humour: I even almost think it is itself that love of which stands written that one may speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet having it not is as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.¹⁷

While the burden of proof must be borne by the more extensive study referred to above, we have at least demonstrated how the isolation of the writer from his society takes two forms: First, the writer feels lonesome and separate and a stranger to the naive unconscious life around him. Second, he observes critically life around him and finds that there is no group with which he would like to identify himself.

This picture of the writer in recent German literature

¹⁶ Translated by Dr. Desmond Powell.

Der mann! die tat! so lechzen volk und hoher rat.
 Hofft nicht auf einen, der an euren tischen ass!
 Vielleicht wer jahrlang unter euren mördern sass,
 In euren zellen schlief: steht auf und tut die tat.

(*Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, v. VI & VII; p. 208.)

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

Denn wenn irgend etwas imstande ist, aus einem Literaten einen Dichter zu machen, so ist es diese meine Bürgerliebe zum Menschlichen, Lebendigen und Gewöhnlichen. Alle Wärme, alle Güte, aller Humor kommt aus ihr, und fast will mir scheinen, als sei sie jene Liebe selbst, von der geschrieben steht, dass einer mit Menschen- und Engelszungen reden könne und ohne sie doch nur ein tönendes Erz und eine klingende Schelle sei. (*op. cit.*, p. 87 f.)

lacks one feature to be complete. It is the desire of the writers to belong to some group, to be accepted by society, to lead. The writers in Germany are not satisfied with entertaining society by beautiful stories and plays. They want to take their place in a process of social change which began before the turn of the century and which is far from being completed now. This process is the gradual substitution of something else for the life pattern of the bourgeois. The necessity of some change is felt by the middle classes themselves: they turn to the writers for the answers to their questions. "There is no country where literary and artistic questions are so eagerly discussed and evoke such serious consideration among the broad mass of average people as in the Germany of today," so Kuno Francke writes about the turn of the century.¹⁸ And the writers in turn feel the necessity to establish a system of values to take the place of one which they believe is doomed. We can understand the all-pervading influence of the feeling of isolation only if we remember this longing of the writer to lead his times. Only out of this desire can we understand why he is so painfully aware of his isolation.

We have given instances of the isolation and its expression in literature. It is even more revealing to investigate how the separateness of the writer is responsible for characteristics of style. One of these might be termed the *Unfestigkeit*, the lack of firmness, the instability. It is indicative of this trait that so many of the heroes are wanderers, tramps, travellers. Many of Knut Hamsun's heroes—and Hamsun's influence on the reading public as well as on the writers is so great, his translations into German so excellent, that we can almost count him with recent German writers—are such geographically unstable characters. One of the most charming representatives of this group is Hermann Hesse's *Knulp*, the sophisticated vagabond who has developed tramping to an art of life. In his dying hour God tells him that the meaning of his life was to bring a little childhood into the lives of the people in the narrow towns, and to be teased and loved by them at the same time. Hesse's style borders on sentimentality; Hausmann and Bonsels are noticeably beyond the border. Their vagabonds

¹⁸ *German Ideals of To-day and other Essays on German Culture*, Boston and New York 1907, p. 330.

are highly emotional men who are unhappy in their instability and long for the security of a home and a respectable bourgeois calling. In his after-war epic poem *Till*, Gerhart Hauptmann has introduced into tramp literature a note of masculine scorn and restraint which has been altogether welcome.

The equivalent of these characters in fiction are writers who have no home to speak of: Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, Theodor Däubler, Christian Morgenstern, Waldemar Bonsels, Peter Hille, Max Dauthendey, Heinrich Mann; none of them has a place where he belongs, some of them have spent most of their lives in the homes of friends. Others have always lived in large cities, in that modern equivalent of homelessness which is called tenancy. A notable exception, again, is Thomas Mann. It is known with how much pride he describes his home life which somehow seems to surprise him, the inventor of dreams. In his novel *Royal Highness* he has drawn a rather soft but nevertheless effective portrait of the young prince who through the love of an American *Bürger* girl finds the contact with his people which he has missed so painfully throughout his life. This novel, so Thomas Mann has told us in his *A Sketch of My Life*, was occasioned by his marriage in 1905. In later works Thomas Mann has described his home life in less disguised form: *A Man and His Dog*, *Gesang vom Kindchen*, *Early Sorrow*. Thomas Mann is fully aware of the dangers of instability. He therefore is also conscious of and grateful for his firm anchorage in his home.

There are writers who are so firmly rooted in a bourgeois family and profession that they never feel the lure of vagabondage. Hans Carossa is typical of this group. Because he is solidly attached to his profession as a doctor, because he is firmly planted in his Bavarian soil, his works show none of the characteristics which this paper attempts to stress. It would be revealing to have an account of that part of recent German literature which stands in contrast to our description. Such an account would have to comprise the *Heimattedichter* as well as the recent works of National-Socialist writers. In numerous cases—Burte, Waggenerl, Wiechert for instance—it might be shown that the writers of the soil actually belong in our category of the unstable writers. Their feeling for the

soil is that of the city dweller, their settling down is that of the tramp who has not the vigor to undergo the trials of the homeless and who therefore clings to the soil with the same fanaticism with which the pathological case clings to his mania.

Nietzsche, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in the chapter *Shadow* of the fourth part, has described this danger:

Thy danger is not small, thou free spirit and wanderer!

Thou hast had a bad day: see that a still worse evening doth not overtake thee!

To such unsettled ones as thou, seemeth at last even a prisoner blessed. Didst thou ever see how captured criminals sleep? They sleep quietly, they enjoy their new security.¹⁹

Many National-Socialist writers are unstable wanderers who have taken refuge in serfdom. They protest their firmness almost hysterically. Only rarely do we find the calm and self-assured feeling of belonging and of firmness which is so characteristic of Carossa's work.

"Lack of firmness" describes a quality in the life of contemporary German writers as well as in the characterization of their figures. It further describes their style. Their characters quickly change from one profession to another, from one country to another, from one attitude to another. Heinrich Mann's Herzogin von Assy in the trilogy *Die Göttinnen* is an example of this, Jakob Wassermann's Christian Wahnschaffe in *The World's Illusion*, another. In less known works we even find the transmigration of one person into another: In Leonhard Frank's *Carl and Anna* the returned prisoner of war assumes the function and the personality of his comrade; the murdered Alexander in Walter Hasenclever's *Die Menschen* takes the place of his murderer; in Gustav Meyrink's *Walpurgisnacht* a contemporary is identical with the histori-

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 335.

Deine Gefahr ist keine kleine, du freier Geist und Wanderer!

Du hast einen schlimmen Tag gehabt: sieh zu, dass dir nicht noch ein schlimmerer Abend kommt!

Solchen Unstäten, wie du, dünkt zuletzt auch ein Gefängnis selig. Sahst du je, wie eingefangene Verbrecher schlafen? Sie schlafen ruhig sie genossen ihre neue Sicherheit.

(*op. cit.*, p. 304.)

cal revolutionary Ziska; in his *Engel vom westlichen Fenster* an heir finishes the life of his ancestors. As the characters change, so does the standpoint of the writer. We often find in one passage similes which have been taken from widely separated fields. The arts themselves are mixed. In a passage of Wassermann's *The Goose Man* we find music described in terms of painting. A certain note is reminiscent of a black veiled woman, another note resembles a youth stretching out his arms. The fermata appears as a human form rising naked out of a shaft, a burning torch in his hand; the trill as a bird timidly fluttering around his nest. Here we have the literary equivalent of a style which in the arts has been given the name *Jugendstil* after a Munich weekly magazine. It is typical of *Jugendstil* that it changes its standpoint, that a house built in this style shows classical architraves, Gothic windows, Roman columns, and modern stylized wreaths. In the same way do we find a mixture of approaches in many literary works—Heinrich Mann is perhaps most typical of this—a mixture which reveals the instability of the writer.

Another characteristic of recent German literature is a *lack of force and direction*, a lack of vectors, so to speak. Especially Hofmannsthal's work shows signs of this weakness. The Marschallin in his *The Knight of the Rose* tells

How one shan't hold a thing,
 How one can't grasp a thing,
 How all things vanish between your fingers,
 All things do melt, for which we reach,
 All things dissolve, like haze and dreams—²⁰

This gentle weakness, I believe, is a result of isolation. We can understand strong and directed drives in man as his reaction to strains and stresses in a field around him, comparable to induced currents. If he is separate from any field or so loosely connected with reality that he can take himself out of it at any time, then these induced currents are bound to be

²⁰ wie man nichts halten soll,
 wie man nichts packen kann,
 wie alles zerläuft zwischen den Fingern,
 alles sich auflöst, wonach wir greifen,
 alles zergeht, wie Dunst und Traum.
 (Op. cit. Erster Band, zweiter Teil, p. 172.)

weak. It is no accident that the weaklings in Hofmannsthal's work are separated from society: the fool in *Fool and Death*, the Marschallin in *Rosenkavalier*, Graf Kari Bühl in *Der Schwierige*. Incidentally, it is of general interest to note how in these three plays Hofmannsthal's attitude changes. He laments isolation and lack of reality in the early play, in the middle one he sadly jokes about it, and in the last, his most mature play, he shows us the human value of a man who accepts isolation and who makes it his pattern of life.

Lack of directed force in the heroes of modern novels becomes more obvious when we compare them with the heroes of earlier epochs. I think it would be difficult to find characters of the indecision and weakness of Hans Castorp or of Klaus Heinrich as heroes of earlier works. The same lack of force may also account for the fact that the dramatic art has suffered in our age. Weaklings are not dramatic material: all of Hofmannsthal's dramas suffer from the fact that their heroes lack decision and force, and even many of Hauptmann's dramas—*Before Dawn*, *The Sunken Bell*, *The Weavers*, *Gabriel Schilling's Flight*, for instance—are wanting in dramatic strength because of the feebleness of their heroes. It is typical of Hauptmann as well as of Hofmannsthal, if not of the entire period, that women are often endowed with the strength that the male characters lack. So Frau John in *The Rats*, Dorothea Angermann, Rose Bernd in the dramas of the same names, Mutter Wolfen in the *Beaver Coat*, Hanne Schäl in *Drayman Henschel*, Gersuind in *Charlemagne's Hostage*, show more dramatic force than male characters in Hauptmann's work, Hofmannsthal's *Electra*, Vittoria in *The Adventurer and the Singer*, Helene Altenwyl in *Der Schwierige*, have more strength of character than male figures. Generally it is true that some of the outstanding characterizations of recent German literature are studies of women: Tony Buddenbrook, Mut in *Joseph in Egypt*, and Lotte Kästner, in the work of Thomas Mann and numerous women in the work of Schnitzler and of Peter Altenberg. Very frequently the woman contrasts with the man—she has the force and steadiness, the natural feeling of belonging, which he lacks.

Comparable to the desperate clinging to the soil of unstable characters in recent works, we find also examples of a

robustness which is an overcompensation for weakness. Especially during and after the war, in expressionistic literature, do we find characters whose decision and firmness, whose entire strength comes from their desperate endeavour not to be weak, not to be torn between different impulses. There is something convulsive, even hysterical, in their screams, protests, and wild actions. They commit patricide and incest or lead the masses to revolution not so much because their demon drives them in that direction, but because they prefer the part of the revolutionary who is driven by strong forces to that of the undecided weakling.

The isolation of the writer from his society is responsible for his lack of steadiness as well as for his lack of directed force. His isolation also accounts for a feeling of *unrealness* which is very prevalent in our period. A feeling of realness is based on the integration of the individual. We feel that an experience is real if it occurs as we expected. In a foreign country, for example, where nothing fits into an accustomed pattern and where we have no expectancy whatsoever, our experience sometimes assumes a character of unreality. The same is true in the reversed sense: the neurotic takes refuge in a world of imagination apart from the real world of man and his institutions: "the retiring from reality is at the same time a withdrawal from human society."²¹

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in his address on Literature as the intellectual province of the nation sees the relation between French literature and the French sense of reality. "Where there is faith in a wholeness of existence—not dismemberment—there is reality."²²

In German literature of recent date there is ample evidence of unrealness as a consequence of disintegration and isolation. We find it most pronounced in such episodes as the séance in *The Magic Mountain*, an episode which had its equivalent in Mann's life in his interest in Schrenck-Notzing's parapsychological experiments, where the boundary between reality and unreality has been traversed. Or we find it in such plays as Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell* or *And Pippa Dances* or

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *Totem und Tabu*, Leipzig and Wien 1913, p. 68.

²² *Das Schrifttum als geistiger Raum der Nation*, in: *Die Berührung der Sphären*, Berlin 1931, p. 426.

The Assumption of Hannele where the world of dreams and fairy tales has been blended with reality, where elfish or angelic beings appear in our world and where people from our world enter the world of the dream. In Hauptmann's short story *Das Meerwunder*, very little known, the hero lives with a mermaid against whose magic he knows no other remedy but to destroy the wooden figurehead representing it. Here we can observe the same strange attraction exercised by the unreal as in Thomas Mann's *Mario and the Magician*. The young waiter Mario knows no other way of liberating himself from the magician Cipolla but to kill him. *Death in Venice* is the tragedy of the writer who surrenders to the call of those forces which are opposed to a realistic and respectable life. Numerous stories of lesser quality show the power of the unreal to stir the imagination of modern writers. Again it is typical of the period that the writers themselves are conscious of this attraction, regret it, and try to resist it. Their model is a writer who stands firmly on the ground of reality; and they compare themselves, as does Mario Malvolto in *Pippo Spano* and as does Tonio Kröger, with actors.

"Out of the life we live we've made a play, and our truth is mixed with our comedy.—Was ever such confusing play presented? It steals us from ourselves and is not nice, as dancing is or jumping on the water, and yet it's richest in seduction of all the games we children know—we children of this strangest age."²³

So Hofmannsthal in a poem, and in similar vein in countless passages. Much of Wassermann's work, so full of dramatic gestures, of picturesque actions, becomes clear when we think of the actor in the modern writer. Some of Thomas Mann's work also shows evidence of stage technique—some of the little gestures with which he characterizes his persons, his

²³ Wir haben aus dem Leben, das wir leben,
Ein Spiel gemacht, und unsere Wahrheit gleitet
Mit unserer Komödie durcheinander.—
Ward je ein so verworrenes Spiel gespielt?
Es stiehlt uns von uns selbst und ist nicht lieblich
Wie Tanzen oder auf dem Wasser Springen,
Und doch ist es das reichste an Verführung
Von allen Spielen, die wir Kinder wissen,
Wir Kinder dieser sonderbaren Zeit.

(*Gesammelte Werke in drei Bänden*, Berlin 1934, Erster Band, erster Teil, p. 46.)

ability to find good and impressive symbols for inner processes, his pleasure in standing back of his work and surveying it from a distance as if it were presented on a stage. Some of his heroes are tricksters and actors. Konsul Buddenbrook plays the part of the senator with a great deal of effort and self-consciousness; Felix Krull makes his entire life a performance, and his simulation in front of the recruiting officer is a classic; Joseph also finds great pleasure in make-believe; even Goethe is not free from similar traits.²⁴

Rilke in an early poem laments the fact that he must live "between day and dream." And his poems are often an attempt to create something real out of a life which lacks realness. Thomas Mann and Hofmannsthal have said how the craft of the writer gives their existence the steadiness and the actuality which they miss in their lives. George describes the attraction of the unreal world of the dream, and he forces himself back into the tangible world of the day. His work is the attempt to make real things and to conquer the actor in himself.

Again, there sometimes is an element of convulsiveness in George's attempt to make his poems real: they are almost too hard, too firm: the reader senses an intention. It is doubtful whether George's poems will ever be loved by people who see themselves and their experiences formed in them. Our generation may admire the proud coldness, the rigid self-control, the brave erectness of a poet who must have felt the lure of the unreal as strongly as his contemporaries. But the love of readers, especially young readers, will go to men who have surrendered to the attraction of the unreal. Christian Morgenstern, too little known in America, is a good example. His poetry is especially attractive because it so often contrasts the world of bourgeois reality with the dream-world. His poem *Heaven and Earth* exemplifies the point:

The night-wind-dog weeps like a child
While rain drips from his shaggy hair.
The new moon flees his chase so wild
And bends her body in the air.

²⁴ In *Lotte in Weimar*.

Far down there walks, a darkish dot,
The forester across the lot.²⁵

Most of the characteristics described here are typical not only of recent German literature: they also apply to English and American literature and they could be demonstrated—though they may not be quite so prevalent—in earlier periods of literature. There certainly exists a connection between isolation, and lack of realness and firmness and force. But the relation is not simply causal, of one direction: it is rather functional. Isolation may very well be the most tangible result of general shifts in the psychological pattern of modern man which is also responsible for all the other changes indicated. There is, for instance, an obvious connection between fiction or drama which destroys the usual sequence of time, and scientific literature which considers time as a fourth dimension. Some of the most recent descriptions of natural events make the distinction between past and future seem arbitrary and unnecessary. In the same way does some recent literature—Priestley as well as Rilke—conceive of life as four-dimensional. To reduce the stylistic changes indicated to the fact of isolation alone would therefore be a rather arbitrary procedure.

The isolation of the intellectual from society can not be the only reason for all the symptoms described here. It is more likely that in our times a general disintegration of society is taking place, the specific form of which in modern German literature we have just described. This disintegration or individualization probably has some connection with the almost universal substitution of money economics for earlier forms of economy. As George Simmel has pointed out in his *Philosophie des Geldes*,²⁶ money enables the individual to participate economically in organizations without becoming in any way attached to them. And since he can sever his connections at

²⁵ Translation by Dr. Frank Chambers.

Der Nachtwindhund weint wie ein Kind,
dieweil sein Fell von Regen rinnt.
Jetzt jagt er wild das Neumondweib,
das hinflieht mit gebognem Leib.
Tief unten geht, ein dunkler Punkt,
Querüberfeld ein Forstadjunkt.

(*Alle Galgenlieder*, Berlin 1932, p. 41.)

²⁶ 2. Auflage, Leipzig 1907, p. 373.

any time, he does not have the feeling of being bound to the organization. There is also some connection between a highly developed division of labor and the disintegration of society. For the division of functions in society will lead to a feeling of mutual dependence only as long as the network of relations can be understood and experienced in its entirety by the individual. When the division of labor becomes so highly developed that the individual does not experience his functional connection with the rest of society, then there will be an isolation of the individual from his society. Another factor contributing to the disintegration may be modern urban living with its replacement of the old life-community of the small town by the dwelling-community of the tenement and apartment house.

The social scientist may some day give us a complete picture of a process which has been suggested here. The humanist must accept isolation as one of the factors conditioning literature and must attempt to evaluate the results of this process. Such evaluation is in no way subordinate to the work of the social scientist. It is true that the social scientist may be able to enlighten him about hows and wherefores in the same way as the physiologist may be able to enlighten the physician. But inasfar as the humanist evaluates, chooses and rejects, his contribution to society is more positive in the same manner as is the physician's over that of the physiologist. To understand and describe is only a preparation for the more human task of evaluating and choosing.

The best illustrations for isolation, lack of firmness and force, and unrealness can be obtained from works of problematic value. Such phenomena as unsteadiness in style or character description, unrealness of atmosphere and plot, lack of force, can best be demonstrated in the minor works of our epoch. And the examples of overcompensation of these traits can usually be found in those works which can not be counted among the good literature. They did not spring from the writer's nature but were rather wrung from his muse under duress. Sentimental "Blood and Soil" literature as well as hysterical expressionism and social criticism belongs in this category. The good literature of our era—and the author calls attention to the fact that he is now leaving the field of scien-

tific truth and entering the realm of personal opinions—belongs under two headings: acceptance of isolation and overcoming of isolation through love. Rainer Maria Rilke is typical of the first, Thomas Mann of the second pattern.

Rilke's early poetry is full of laments of the kind we find in the work of young Hofmannsthal, and for which his *The Fool and Death* is typical. Rilke stands aside and apart—and gently laments this fact. In later years he has often said how little he thinks of his early work. His trip to Russia opened his eyes to the possibilities of solitude. His *Stundenbuch* is the first result of his new outlook. In the *Neue Gedichte* he discovers, possibly under the influence of Rodin's "Il faut toujours travailler," the satisfaction of doing fine work, comparable in this respect to Stefan George, who also found stability and peace in his attempts to make perfect poems. Rilke's great novel *Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*, also translated as *The Journal of My Other Self*, is centered around the problem of isolation. In the end Brigge finds the meaning of it all. He reinterprets the parable of the Prodigal Son: The prodigal son went away because he wanted to be himself—and he must go away again because in the group he fears to lose himself. Even though his family love him, or just because they love him, they force him to be something he is not. And since being true to himself is the basic law of his life, he must leave them and go away again. This decision of the prodigal son has its counterpart in Rilke's life. He leaves his young wife and child and lives apart from them, in the noncommittal isolation of the wanderer. In 1906 he writes to his wife:

By giving in prematurely to that which under the guise of duty wants to overpower me and make me useful, I probably would exclude some uncertainties from my life as well as the appearance of continually wanting to evade. But I feel that in so doing I would also exclude the great and wonderful aids which in almost rhythmical sequence take hold of me. For these aids do not belong to a comprehensible order which is guided by energy and the consciousness of duty.²⁷

²⁷ Durch jedes vorzeitige Eingehen auf das, was als "Pflicht" mich überwältigen und brauchbar machen will, schliesse ich wohl einige Un-

We know to-day, from his *Duinese Elegies*, that in his isolation Rilke grew until he reached an understanding of the world which could comprise life and death in one, and which finally overcame the bourgeois conception of time as a directed process. Rilke in 1906 could not know of the rewards of his decision and he did not know that he would have to lie barren for over ten years. No matter what our relation to him, we must recognize the self-sureness of the genius in his early decision to choose isolation. For it was his isolation which produced such lines as these:

Beloved Earth, I will live! Believe me, your springs
Are not needed to win me for you. One,
just one is too much for my blood.
Wholly am I committed to you, from afar.
Right have you always been, and your sacred device
is familiar Death.
Behold I live. But of what? Neither childhood nor
future grow less . . . A surplus existence
grows in my heart.²⁸

The isolation of the poet from his society then is not simply a question of "maladjustment." Only an age when the commonplace mind "has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will"²⁹ could misunderstand the function of the poet so fundamentally. There may have been an age when the writer was inte-

sicherheiten und den Anschein jenes beständigen Ausweichenwollens aus meinem Leben aus, aber ich fühle, dass damit auch die grossen wunderbaren Hilfen, die in fast rhythmischer Folge in mich eingreifen, ausgeschlossen würden aus einer absehbaren, von Energie und Pflichtbewusstsein geleiteten Ordnung, in die sie nicht mehr gehören.—(*Briefe aus den Jahren 1906 bis 1907, Leipzig 1930, p. 132.*)

²⁸ Translated by Dr. Lewis Knapp.

Erde, du liebe, ich will. O glaub, es bedürfte
nicht deiner Frühlinge mehr, mich dir zu gewinnen, einer,
ach, ein einziger, ist schon dem Blute zu viel.
Namenlos bin ich zu dir entschlossen, von weit her.
Immer warst du im Recht, und dein heiliger Einfall
ist der vertrauliche Tod.
Siehe, ich lebe. Woraus? Weder Kindheit noch Zukunft
werden weniger . . . Überzähliges Dasein
entspringt mir im Herzen.

(End of the ninth elegy, *Gesammelte Werke*, v. 3, Leipzig 1930, p. 301.)

²⁹ Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, translated from the Spanish, London 1932, p. 18.

grated in his society. In our age isolation is the natural life pattern of the poet. As Delmore Schwartz has put it in a paper on *The Isolation of Modern Poetry*: "The poet is not isolated from society but society is isolated from him."⁵⁰ Isolated from a society which has lost contact with the stream of life, Rilke found that contact again. In the lowly jugglers did he discover a divine force as well as in the fig tree, in the hero as well as in the animal. Not without delight do we discover a very similar development in the author whose path seemed to go in a direction opposite to Rilke, namely Thomas Mann.

Tento Kroger's words about the love of the artist for his times, for the normal and well behaved, for the bourgeois, about his "furtive and consuming yearning for the raptures of the commonplace," set the program for a life which considered itself civic and social. Not only did Thomas Mann take part in the intellectual life of his times, not only did he accept honours with the grace of the philosopher king, he also felt as part of his society—a bourgeois, a child of Lubeck, a German. But as the years have advanced and his country has undergone a "revolt of the masses," this rare spirit has come to feel somewhat differently about his relation to his times. He has undertaken to find the human spirit in the early history of Israel, in the stories of Joseph and his brothers. And in his latest book, *Lotte in Weimar*, he has shown such understanding for the supreme isolation of Goethe from his times that we may well believe that he himself has undergone a change of position which brings him into Rilke's closest neighbourhood. Like Rilke he now stands, not outside, but beyond, his society. He has found an integration which links him to the world, not to a particular place or time. Isolation from his group has become to him an accepted and not very important fact. He does not long for the companionship of the market any more. He feels himself part of an organization which reaches beyond his times and which joins him to the great.

⁵⁰ Paper given at the MLA convention in New Orleans, 1939, Section English XI.

ELLEN TERRY—HISTRIONIC ENIGMA

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(The following essay is a chapter from the writer's *Histrionic Methods and Acting Traditions on the London Stage from 1870 to 1890: Studies in the Conflict of the Old and New Styles of Acting*, a dissertation to be submitted to the Graduate School of Yale University in April, 1940, in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.)

The ever present difficulty of discussing and analyzing the work of actors and actresses of the past is increased a hundred-fold when we approach a study of the giants of personality who dominated not only the Lyceum stage but the whole London stage at the close of the nineteenth century. Fascinating as is the problem of Henry Irving, one finds it even more hopeless to try to catch in words the spirit of Ellen Terry, whose very name seemed to Bernard Shaw "the most beautiful name in the world: it rings like a chime through the last quarter of the 19th century. It has a lovely rhythm in it."¹ The attempt to place the art of this actress, to define it, baffled the critics of the day, has baffled almost all who have commented upon her. Inevitably the name of Madge Kendal, her greatest rival, found its way into many of the discussions of Ellen Terry; for not only did their methods form a nice contrast, but the abilities of the former actress were so obviously recognizable as largely technical that critics felt that in introducing the contrast they were giving to their comments on the latter lady a firm and tangible ground. But unhappily many commentators were led to suppose that since the contrast existed between the two actresses and since Mrs. Kendal's skill was so largely one of technique, the art of Terry must necessarily be one largely of personality. Even so veteran a critic as Percy Fitzgerald was capable, as late as 1893, of declaring Ellen Terry "lacking, no doubt, in strict training, and in that high methodized finish, security of touch, which is only to be secured by training," and of opposing to her Mrs. Kendal, as "an actress *au bout des ongles*, possessing the whole round

¹ Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw, *A Correspondence*, New York 1931, p. 48.

of histrionic arts and devices."² Rather more cautiously, and adopting an enigmatic manner of phrase to describe an enigma in acting, ten years earlier J. Comyns Carr had spoken of the two actresses and their art as "most sharply contrasted," and had written: "In a certain sense Miss Terry may be said to begin where Mrs. Kendal leaves off. There is much that she cannot do at all which Mrs. Kendal does easily and well, but when she is at her best she is unapproachable." This is vague enough, surely, but Carr went on to call attention to Ellen Terry's ability to play traditional and poetic parts, to handle with equal versatility true pathos and real gaiety, to play the grief of Ophelia, the sentiment of W. G. Wills's Olivia, the heart-break of Desdemona, and the raillery of Beatrice with the blending of reality and imagination that constitutes true impersonation.³ Yet the obvious conclusion that such powers of impersonation must have been the result of a training and a technique even firmer and sounder than Mrs. Kendal's, since the art was a broader one, was not made, and in the main few contemporary critics showed the appreciation of Ellen Terry's matured if erratic command of technique which *The Saturday Review* evidenced in 1879 by comparing her apparent spontaneity but real method, her range and her real genius, her versatility, with that of Sarah Bernhardt.⁴

The truth was, of course, that Ellen Terry had had the same kind of training, the same kind of apprenticeship under old traditional methods of sound acting, which Mrs. Kendal had experienced. She was born of theatrical blood as firmly rooted in the theatre for generations as the Robertson blood, she entered the stage as early, she had had as varied an experience, and she had in addition what almost every person who ever wrote of her called charm, a highly specialized variety of the "Terry charm." Seymour Hicks wrote recently of how much annoyed she was when notices of her performances always referred to this charm and begged the question of her

² Percy Fitzgerald, *Henry Irving: A Record of Twenty Years at the Lyceum*, London 1893, p. 104.

³ J. Comyns Carr, "English Actors:—Yesterday and To-day," *The Fortnightly Review*, XXXIX, February 1883, pp. 230-231.

⁴ *Vide* the interesting passage quoted, "En Passant," *The Theatre*, June 1879, p. 319.

art: "Many a critic dwelt continually on this valuable asset of hers, and, in doing so, sometimes forgot that beneath an apparently unconscious fairy-like performance in comedy, she was possessed of magical technique, equal, indeed, to that of her superlative rival, Madge Kendal, the greatest all-round actress I ever saw."⁵ The actress was perfectly right in resenting the attempts to make out a success of pure personality. She had carefully studied her business, she went on studying it even after she had a command of her means such as in her day was becoming constantly rarer. She owed her first training in the theatre and its means and methods to the lessons she learned as a child from the famous Ellen Tree, Mrs. Charles Kean.⁶ And she learned the lessons so systematically that, as Shaw put it in 1897, "to this day her business is always thoroughly well done, and her part gets over the footlights to the ends of the house without loss of a syllable or the waste of a stroke."⁷ In other words, as Shaw wrote elsewhere, "she had skill at the back of her beauty and charm."⁸ But the beauty and the charm too often blinded critics to the skill.

In addition to the precepts of Mrs. Kean, of her older sister Kate, of good provincial teachers like Chute of Bristol, of her whole family, she had the good luck to receive from Tom

⁵ Seymour Hicks, *Night Lights*, London 1938, p. 121. The two actresses in maturity came into actual competition on the stage only once, when Beerbohm Tree ensnared them both from retirement to play for his Falstaff *The Merry Wives*. Mrs. Alec-Tweedie wrote of the contrast in method which they presented, reflected on the different use each had made of her training and talents, the one in old, the other in new plays, but concluded (*Behind the Footlights*, New York 1904, p. 179): "No stronger contrast could have been imagined; and yet, although neither part actually suited either, the finished actress was evident in every gesture, every tone, every look of both, and it would be hard to say which achieved the greatest triumph, each was so perfect in her own particular way." G. P. Bancroft was willing to grant to Terry the palm in one respect at least, a really all-around training which enabled her to wear the costume of the play correctly (*Stage and Bar*, London 1939, p. 175): "Ellen Terry, in fact, was, to use her own phrase, 'a Shakespeare girl'. Mrs. Kendal was more at home in a Harley Street drawing-room."

⁶ Vide Ellen Terry, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, ed. by Christopher St. John, London 1932, pp. 36-37, for a tribute to Mrs. Kean.

⁷ Bernard Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*, New York 1928, II, pp. 311-312. Dutton Cook ("Ellen Terry," *The Theatre*, June 1880, pp. 342-343) recognized "a consummate actress with all the refinements and resources of her art at command," "a skilled elocutionist," possessed of "special inventiveness and skill."

⁸ Shaw, *Terry-Shaw Correspondence*, preface, p. xxv.

Taylor and Charles Reade in the sixties the same sort of careful instruction in technical matters which she received in the nineties from the letters of Shaw. Reade drew her from her retirement in the country with Edward Godwin to take over the part of Philippa in *The Wandering Heir* at the Queen's in 1874.⁹ During the run of the play he carefully criticized her performance, and taught her much, warning her of a tendency toward an erratic alternation of vigor and "limping," first showing her the value of using her gift of rapid movement, particularly in making rushing exits,¹⁰ trying his best to teach her the value of swift thinking and swift utterances,¹¹ but urging her also to "vary the pace,"¹² and showing her the necessity of keeping a clean-cut distinction between speaking and business and realizing the value of pause.¹³ All these lessons Ellen Terry took to heart and profited by. Reade made one of the most discerning comments ever penned upon her special ability when he wrote to her: "Of course, I do not expect or desire to make a melodramatic actress of you, but still I think you capable of any effect, provided it is not sustained too long." This recognition of the shimmering effect of her art she herself appreciated, and wrote: "On the stage, I can pass swiftly from one effect to another, but I cannot fix *one*, and dwell on it, with that superb concentration which seems to me the special attribute of the tragic actress."¹⁴ With her usual sound

⁹ The part had been played by Mrs. John Wood. Ellen Terry noted (*Memoirs with a preface, notes and additional biographical chapters by Edith Craig and Christopher St. John*, New York 1932, p. 70): "It is curious how often I have 'followed' others. I never 'created' a part, as theatrical jargon has it, until I played Olivia at the Court, and I had to challenge comparison, in turn, with Miss Marie Wilton, Mrs. John Wood and Mrs. Kendal. Perhaps it was better for me than if I had had parts especially written for me, and with which no other names were associated."

¹⁰ Ellen Terry, *The Story of My Life*, London 1908, p. 92. Cf. Gordon Craig, *Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self*, London n. d., p. 165: "it would seem as though much lay, with her, in her movement—and indeed, an entrance with her was a gliding, eager thing." Vide Shaw's comment to her, *Correspondence*, p. 166: "you lay hold of your part with a tremendous nervous grip. It is not seen on the stage, because you come on with a grip ready fixed."

¹¹ Vide Terry, *Life*, p. 93.

¹² Vide *ibidem*, pp. 94, 96.

¹³ Vide *ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 95. Frederick Wedmore ("Miss Ellen Terry at the Queen's Theatre," *The Academy* V, March 7, 1874, p. 271) wrote in praise of her facial and vocal expressiveness, but complained of want of skill and experience.

common sense, she realized that she was weak in the "scientific principles of acting," and reflected that "There is all the difference in the world between departure from recognized rules by one who has learned to obey them, and neglect of them through want of training or want of skill or want of understanding. Before you can be eccentric you must know where the circle is."¹⁵ If Ellen Terry rose above the mediocrity which distinguished the players of her day, it is evident that she did it not by beauty and charm alone, although that beauty and that charm disturbed even the teacher who worked so hard in 1874 to improve her grasp of the "scientific principles of acting," for Reade wrote of her possibly the most memorable tribute to her peculiar loveliness:

Ellen Terry is an enigma. Her eyes are pale, her nose rather long, her mouth nothing particular, complexion a delicate brick-dust, her hair rather like tow. Yet, somehow, she is *beautiful*. Her expression *kills* any pretty face you see beside her. Her figure is lean and bony, her hand masculine in size and form. Yet she is a pattern of fawn-like grace. Whether in movement or repose grace *pervades the hussy*. In character impulsive, intelligent, weak, hysterical—in short, all that is abominable and charming in woman. Ellen Terry is a very charming actress.¹⁶

Despite some success personally and a distinct improvement technically in *The Wandering Heir*, Ellen Terry was ready, after a tour with Reade, to retire again from the stage, when the Bancrofts engaged her to play Portia to the Shylock of Charles Coghlan. The success of this performance established her immediately as one of the leading actresses of the day, and henceforth her continuing on the stage was inevitable. In the Bancroft *Merchant of Venice*, the soundness of the young actress's training was immediately apparent in contrast to the "reserved force" lack of acting of the rest of the cast

¹⁵ Terry, *Life*, p. 96.

¹⁶ Charles L. Reade and Rev. Compton Reade, *Memoir of Charles Reade*, New York 1887, pp. 402-403. Cf. Thomas Hardy's description of her in 1891 (Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*, New York 1928, p. 305): "Presently Ellen Terry arrived—diaphanous—a sort of balsam or sea-anemone, without shadow . . . like a machine in which, if you press a spring, all the works fly open." Other attempts to realize her in words might be mentioned: Percy Fitzgerald, "Actors' Faces," *The Theatre*, December 1878, p. 359; Mrs. Alec-Tweedie, *op. cit.*, p. 42; T. Edgar Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters*, London 1902, pp. 304-306; Amy Leslie, *Some Players*, New York 1906, p. 50; Lane Crauford, *Acting, Its Theory and Practice*, London 1930, pp. 57, 63; Bernard Shaw, *Pen Portraits and Reviews*, London 1931, p. 175; Craig, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114.

of new school players, particularly Coghlan. Despite the fact that Clement Scott, as leading apologist for the new school, tried to make up for the failure of the Shylock by claiming the Portia as the triumph of naturalism: "No traces of the stage were here, no renewal of old business, no suggestion of immemorial traditions."¹⁷ Dutton Cook, Joseph Knight, and other critics perceived that the triumph, while in part personal, was largely that of "sounder and safer views as to the due rendering of the poetic drama" than those of the new school, of a trained elocutionary method and of a really histrionic "care and inventiveness in regard to details."¹⁸ It was recognized at once that "The lady clearly does not belong to the school who imagine that the whole art of acting consists in not acting at all," and that, "instead of being less natural" by the use of a sound and traditional technique, "sincerity and truth are stamped upon her entire performance."¹⁹ It was recognized that the stage had acquired a "refined and accomplished comédienne preserving the invaluable traditions of her noble art, and showing what a height it might attain," and that her training was the necessary element to enable her to become "a finely-formed link joining two styles of acting, the artistic and the untrained."²⁰

If the Portia was applauded in the Prince of Wales's venture into Shakespeare, the production as a whole was a failure and was speedily withdrawn to make way for a revival of Bulwer Lytton's *Money*, with Ellen Terry as Clara Douglas. This performance was the subject of a long letter of advice from Tom Taylor, especially warning her to cultivate the quality of repose in acting and to avoid the contemporary over-fidgetiness.²¹ Her next important appearance with the Ban-

¹⁷ Vide Clement Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-day*, London 1899, I, 587.

¹⁸ Vide Dutton Cook, *Nights at the Play*, London 1883, II, 70-71; Joseph Knight, *Theatrical Notes*, London 1893, p. 28; "At the Prince of Wales's," *Punch* LXVIII, May 1, 1875, p. 186.

¹⁹ *Daily News*, April 19, 1875, quoted in Charles Eyre Pascoe, *Our Actors and Actresses. The Dramatic List*, London 1880, p. 335.

²⁰ *The Theatre*, August 1878, p.16. Vide Forrest Izard, *Heroines of the Modern Stage*, New York 1915, p. 118.

²¹ Vide Terry, *Life*, pp. 110-111, and cf. Cook, *Nights*, II, 76, and H. Schütz Wilson, "A Comparison in a Character," *The Theatre*, April 1880, pp. 211-212, a rather hazy attempt to contrast the realistic interpretation of Terry with the conventional one of Helena Faucit.

crofts was in the hitherto unimportant part of Mabel Vane in Reade and Taylor's *Masks and Faces*, which, according to Frederick Wedmore, she brought into "the front line." Indeed, he found the performance "more wholly satisfying than her admirable Portia," excellent in emphasis and elocution, in "tones and looks," but especially in gesture. The emphasis of this critic upon what was to become one of her most frequently noted characteristics, her sense of picturesque pose,²² suggests that she had taken to heart Taylor's advice concerning the value of repose. An engagement at the Prince of Wales's naturally entailed appearance in a Robertson play, but of Ellen Terry's Blanche Hayes in *Ours* in 1876, there is little record left except that of Shaw, who first saw her in this play and on whom she left "an impression of waywardness; of not quite fitting into her part and not wanting to." He was not really convinced of her ability until he saw her as Lilian Vavasour in Taylor's *New Men and Old Acres*, which he thought was "made a success" by her performance."²³ Henry Labouchere was annoyed by her work in this part, because of her unevenness, "at one moment perfect, at another beneath criticism;" but he still detected in her "a spark of that real genius which is born and not acquired."²⁴ The actress was now with John Hare at the Court, but she did not register strongly at her new home until the production of W.G.Wills's *Olivia* in 1878, when she scored an even greater success than she had as Portia. Labouchere was enchanted. "I never, either on the French, the German, or the English stage, witnessed anything superior to her acting in the scene at the inn," he wrote. "It was the highest effort of histrionic art, because not one vestige of art could be perceived."²⁵ Cook, analyzing various moments of her performance, declared her in round terms "an artist of distinct genius."²⁶

Of her work at the Prince of Wales's, Ellen Terry wrote modestly that she hoped her managers "found me a *useful* ac-

²² Wedmore, *The Academy* VIII, November 13, 1875, p. 514.

²³ Shaw, *Correspondence*, preface, pp. xx-xxi.

²⁴ Henry du Pré Labouchere, "The Court Theatre," *Truth* I, January 11, 1877, p. 41.

²⁵ Labouchere, "The Vicar of Wakefield," *Truth* III, April 4, 1878, p. 428.

²⁶ Cook, *Nights* II, pp. 181-182.

tress—ever the dull height of my ambition.”²⁷ For herself she had learned to combine with the breadth which she had developed in her earliest days with the Keans at the Princess’s, the necessary delicacy, subtlety, and intimacy needed for the small theatre and the new realistic drama. Wisely she discovered that in the plays of the newer school, “the breadth had to be there just the same—as seen through the wrong end of the microscope. In acting one must possess great strength before one can be delicate in the right way. Too often weakness is mistaken for delicacy.”²⁸ At the Court she had learned the new school virtues of ensemble playing and sound rehearsing, which incidentally she missed later at the Lyceum, for she herself complained to Shaw that Irving never rehearsed her in the many parts she played with him.²⁹

In 1878 Henry Irving became sole lessee of the Lyceum Theatre and on the advice of Lady Pollock hired Ellen Terry to play Ophelia in his revival of *Hamlet*. They had earlier played together once late in 1867 as Katharine and Petruchio in Garrick’s version of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the New Queen’s, under Labouchere’s management. Of the union of the two popular and highly individualistic players much was written in anticipation and in retrospect, the burden of the comment being summed up by R. Farquharson Sharp:

His selection of her as his “leading lady” was as creditable to his perspicacity as it was agreeable to her. She was devoted to her art and took her work seriously, as he did; she had as strong a leaning towards the romantic as he, and an inextinguishable enthusiasm for Shakespeare; she had youth, beauty, intelligence and experience to help her, but, above all, she was an actress of exactly the temperament to match with his. His own triumphs had been (as, indeed, had hers) largely triumphs of personality and temperament; and here was the indispensable thing, an artistic temperament that matched his so well that each would stimulate and react upon the other. Her unselfishness and loyalty, too, throughout their joint career, were invaluable, and none acknowledged it more generously than he.³⁰

²⁷ Terry, *Life*, p. 122.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 136.

²⁹ *Vide Correspondence*, pp. 60-61, *Memoirs*, p. 121. Cf. Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³⁰ R. Farquharson Sharp, *A Short History of the English Stage*, London 1909, p. 168. *Vide also* Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, London 1906, II, p. 194; “A Gain to Art,” *The Theatre*, September 1879, p. 65; William Archer, *Henry Irving, Actor and Manager, A Critical Study*, London 1883, pp. 100-101; J. Ranken Towse, “Ellen Terry,” *The Nation* CXXVII, August 8, 1928, p. 133.

One point of kinship between manager and leading lady which Sharp did not emphasize was their common interest in, and use of, the picturesque and the pictorial in pose and general technique. Ellen Terry herself was conscious of how much she "brought help, too, in pictorial matters."³¹ The whole problem of the effect of her union with Irving upon Ellen Terry's art and her development as an actress is a puzzling one, upon which many words have been wasted.

Bram Stoker, naturally prejudiced in favor of Henry Irving, suggested that at least in the early days of their virtual partnership the manager was careful to provide opportunities for her, listing as plays put on for her *Iolanthe*, *The Cup*, *The Belle's Strategem*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Olivia*. With Stoker's entire list we cannot agree: the production of Tennyson's *The Cup*, one suspects, was a sop to public taste, to the aestheticism of the moment; *The Belle's Strategem* was already in his repertory before Irving engaged Ellen Terry; he probably had a sneaking desire to pose as Romeo, and certainly his success as Benedick was enough to warrant his playing the part, granting the great boon of a perfect Beatrice. That *Iolanthe*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Olivia* did not contain great roles "for a man who had been accustomed for years to 'carry the play on his back,'" ³² we can agree. Shaw, of course, never tired of complaining that the actresses's art was completely wasted at the Lyceum. "What a theatre for a woman of genius to be attached to! Obsolete tomfooleries like 'Robert Macaire,' school-girl charades like 'Nance Oldfield,' blank verse by Wills, Comyns Carr, and Calmour, with intervals of hashed Shakespeare," he wrote in 1895, "and all the time a stream of splendid woman's parts pouring from the Ibsen volcano and minor craters, and being snapped up by the rising generation."³³ I am not quite sure that this is fair. As of the nineties, possibly yes, although I cannot see Ellen Terry necessarily as happy in Ibsen as she was in Shakespeare. And if we consider only

³¹ Terry, *Life*, p. 150. Vide Sir Frank Benson, *My Memories*, London 1930, p. 187; Shaw, *Pen Portraits*, p. 178, *Dramatic Opinions*, II, p. 312.

³² Stoker, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 191-192.

³³ Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions*, I, pp. 21-22; vide *Pen Portraits*, pp. 174-175, 178.

the confines of our chosen period, it must be noted that, if forced to play in a deal of fustian, Ellen Terry was given a chance at the Lyceum to play various great parts in Shakespeare instead of being wasted on Robertson, Byron, Pinero, or adaptations from the French. On the other hand, Irving did not always provide a part for her in the fustian pieces, and James Agate accordingly regarded her union with Irving as a "diminishing partnership,"³⁴ while Charles Morgan declared the actress "humanized the stage and drugged the audience with her charm while Irving hit them on the hand."³⁵

But if such keen critics as Shaw and Agate were eventually to decide that the actress was wasted at the Lyceum, only one critic, Labouchere, contemporaneously noted in her performance of Ophelia any such waste, declaring the part unworthy of her, and furthermore attacking her handling of the mad scene for the absence of timeworn traditions, with nothing substituted in their place.³⁶ She herself was typically dissatisfied with her own work, and commented later: "Ophelia only *pervades* the scenes in which she is concerned until the mad scene. This was a tremendous thing for me, who am not capable of *sustained* effort, but can perhaps manage a *cumulative* effort better than most actresses. I have been told that Ophelia has 'nothing to do' at first. I found so much to do! Little bits of business which, slight in themselves, contributed to a definite result, and kept me always in the picture."³⁷ Much was made of the fact that the actress had visited Benstead Asylum for lunatics before attempting the mad scene,³⁸ but the actress with her usual sanity commented: "My experiences convinced me that the actor must imagine first and observe afterwards. It is no good observing life and bringing the result to the stage without selection, without a definite idea.

³⁴ James Agate, *Playgoing*, New York 1927, p. 59.

³⁵ Charles Morgan, "Irving and the Theatre," *The New York Sunday Times*, February 20, 1938, section 11, p. 3.

³⁶ Labouchere, "Hamlet," *Truth*, V, January 9, 1879, p. 37.

³⁷ Terry, *Life*, p. 154. For comment on these "bits of business," *vide* "At the Play," *The Theatre*, February 1879, p. 47; Moy Thomas, "Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry at the Lyceum," *The Academy* XV, January 4, 1879, p. 19; Austin Brereton, *The Life of Henry Irving*, London 1908, I, pp. 276-277; Oscar Wilde, *Complete Writings*, IV *Reviews*, New York 1909, pp. 18-19.

³⁸ *Vide* William Archer, *Masks or Faces? A Study in the Psychology of Acting*, London 1888, p. 100.

The idea must come first, the realism afterwards,"³⁹ Ellen Terry, in other words, was too sound an actress to become a follower of fads, new school or otherwise. Despite Labouchere's very salutary croaking, Cook and Knight were probably right in recognizing in her first Lyceum performance the work of an actress of personal graces and endowments, of musical speech, but also of elocutionary skill, sound training and technique, and real power and intensity.⁴⁰

Ellen Terry's second appearance at the Lyceum was in a part less good even than Ophelia and less suited to her particular gifts. She had already played Pauline in Bulwer Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons* at a special matinée for Charles Coghlan's benefit in 1875, and in her memoirs she recorded her troubles with the part, feeling that she was better with Coghlan than with Irving, but "never really good." She attributed what seemed to her a failure in the part to her initial attempt to "understand Pauline," in order to gain the "idea" for her impersonation; this being impossible, since Pauline is not a credible but a wholly theatrical figure, she "groped after the definite rules which had always governed the delivery of Pauline's fustian, and the fate that commonly overtakes those who try to put old wine into new bottles overtook" her.⁴¹ Strangely enough, Knight at the 1875 performance, and Cook and others at the 1879 revival, were strongly impressed with her Pauline, especially with her "new school" reading of the part, which she herself condemned.⁴² Scott and Labouchere alone objected violently to the interpretation as a whole, although agreeing with their fellows upon the picturesque effectiveness of the actress in the wearing of costume and in pose, Labouchere summing up the performance in words with which the actress herself must have agreed: "Pauline should be over-acted; Miss Terry under-acted it. Pauline can no more be made a soft, gentle, emotional miss of the day, than Othello could be acted

³⁹ Terry, *Life*, p. 155.

⁴⁰ Vide Cook, *Nights*, II, p. 202; Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁴¹ Terry, *Life*, p. 109.

⁴² Vide Knight, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52; Cook, *Nights*, II, pp. 205-206; "The Theatres," *The Saturday Review* XLVII, April 26, 1879, p. 825; Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions*, I, p. 130.

by a votary of the crutchstick and toothpick school with a cigar in his mouth."⁴³

Before the first year of her Lyceum engagement was over, the actress had a chance to repeat her performance of Portia which had first given her prominence in 1875. Critics could find little new to say, but they said over again and with more fervor what they had already said in 1875, her picturesqueness in her Renaissance costume, her comedy, and her elocution being most praised.⁴⁴ With typical modesty and typical interest in her work, Ellen Terry wrote: "I have tried five or six different ways of treating Portia, but the way I think best is not the one which finds the heartiest response from my audiences," and reflected "every ten years an actor can reconsider a Shakespeare part and find new life in it for his new purpose and new audiences."⁴⁵

In 1880 Irving produced Wills's *Iolanthe*, possibly as advance penance for his subsequent revival of *The Corsican Brothers*, the latter certainly no play for his co-star.⁴⁶ After the run of the old Dumas melodrama, partly, one suspects, to get a vacation from acting, partly to provide spectacular entertainment, but mainly to "cash in" on the aesthetic craze, he produced Tennyson's undramatic play, *The Cup*; Labouchere, reflecting upon Irving's cleverness "at a time of affected aestheticism, of rapture and intensity, of sad wall paper and queer dadoes" in engaging Ellen Terry, the "embodiment of the aspirations of modern art," concluded: "The next clever thing to engaging Miss Terry was producing 'The Cup.' There is a learned air about the whole thing that suits the sham culture of society, and the era of high schools and advanced edu-

⁴³ Labouchere, "The Lady of Lyons," *Truth* V, April 24, 1879; cf. Clement Scott, *From "The Bells" to "King Arthur"*, London 1896, pp. 147-149.

⁴⁴ *Vide* Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 305; Cook, *Nights*, II, pp. 226-227; Scott, *Drama*, II, pp. 95-96; "The Bells", pp. 168-169; William Winter, *Henry Irving*, New York 1885, p. 36; *Shakespeare on the Stage I*, London 1912, pp. 217-218; J. Ranken Towse, *Sixty Years of the Theatre*, New York 1916, p. 244; Labouchere, "Shylock at the Lyceum," *Truth* VI, November 6, 1879, p. 568. *Vide* Terry, *Life*, pp. 184-185, for opinion of Dr. Furnivall, and pp. 185-186, for that of Lady Pollock.

⁴⁵ Terry, *Life*, p. 107.

⁴⁶ *Vide* J. Comyns Carr, "Our Play-Box," *The Theatre*, June 1880, pp. 366-367, for a typical review of *Iolanthe*; both play and part were so slight that the favorably prejudiced Carr had considerable difficulty proving that the actress was even acting.

cation."⁴⁷ That Irving was right in his canny appeal to contemporary fads was proved by the chorus of exultation that arose from the aesthetics, who, although the play and the part in the main simply emphasized "all the familiar beauties" of Ellen Terry's style, raved over "the invention and variety of her gesture, the exquisite grace with which she carries the difficult costume," the "decided advance in her command over the music of blank verse," and "the suggestion of a controlled intensity of passion."⁴⁸

In the next production at the Lyceum, *Othello*, the leading lady was almost forgotten in the problem of trying to assess the relative virtues of Irving and Edwin Booth, who alternated the parts of Othello and Iago. Labouchere and Cook, in typical notices, tried to let the Desdemona down as gently as possible.⁴⁹ Mowbray Morris made a serious attempt to analyze the quality of her acting as a whole. He admitted her limited range, her erratic tendencies, but claimed for her at her best absolute individuality, the "grand style." He pointed out several moments in *Othello* in which "we get what none other of her contemporaries can give; much they can give which she cannot; but this is hers alone, this seeming simple tenderness and grace, these 'tears in the voice.'"⁵⁰

"This seeming simple tenderness and grace, these 'tears in the voice,'" should have aided Ellen Terry to make a success of Juliet the following year, but few critics were satisfied with the performance. She herself knew that "It was perhaps the greatest opportunity that I had yet had at the Lyceum,"

⁴⁷ Labouchere, "The Cup," *Truth* IX, January 13, 1881, p. 47.

⁴⁸ J. Comyns Carr, "Our Play-Box," *The Theatre*, February 1881, p. 90. Cf. Lady Pollock, "The Cup, at the Lyceum," *Macmillan's Magazine* XLIII, February 1881, pp. 316-320. Scott (*Ellen Terry*, New York 1900, pp. 142-144) became ecstatic in memory over the *tableaux vivants*. The Earl of Lytton ("Miss Anderson's Juliet," *The Nineteenth Century* XVI, December 1884, pp. 882-883) hailed the actress's reading of the invocation to Artemis as the only competent blank verse reading of the period. Theodore Martin (*Essays on the Drama, Second Series*, London 1889, pp. 213-215) entered a dissenting vote, pointing out the lack of tragic power in the last act; cf. "Cup and Ball at the Lyceum," *Punch* LXXX, January 15, 1881, p. 13; Cook, *Nights*, II, pp. 292-293.

⁴⁹ Vide Labouchere, "Othello," *Truth* IX, May 12, 1881, p. 639; Cook, *Nights*, II, p. 320.

⁵⁰ "Othello" at the Lyceum," *Macmillan's Magazine* XLIV, July 1881, pp. 217-218; the article, anonymous in the periodical, was reprinted in Morris's *Essays in Theatrical Criticism*, London 1882, where the same passage will be found, pp. 115-116.

but she knew she had missed the opportunity: "I read everything that had ever been written about her before I had myself decided what she was. It was a dreadful mistake. That was the first thing wrong with my Juliet—lack of original impulse." She concluded: "Now I understand Juliet better. Now I know how she should be played. But time is inexorable. At sixty, know what one may, one cannot play Juliet."⁵¹ Rather strangely, since she felt that her greatest error was a too slavish study of tradition, the criticism most levelled against her was that she presented too untraditional and too "new school" an interpretation. "Natural acting," wrote Clement Scott, "is well enough, but it must not decline into under-acting. Save in those tragic moments that are inseparable from the poet's conception of Juliet—that belong to the character, and cannot be undervalued—moments that give the play its life and intensity, its effect and meaning, the presence of Miss Ellen Terry was entirely satisfying."⁵² Only Scott's lack of irony and abundance of sentimentality keep this from being one of the most devastating criticisms ever written. It implies that Ellen Terry *looked* Juliet, but did not act the part. It was noted that the influence of Irving upon her was becoming stronger, evidenced by too much movement and too jerky and emphatic reading of blank verse. She was praised in the opening scenes, but criticized severely for her failure in all the key scenes, notably in the balcony and potion scenes.

In so far as her faults as Juliet were expiable, she made up for them by the crowning triumph of her Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* the following year. Critical defences were let down completely before the overwhelming success of this performance. "When one has said that an actress plays a part to perfection," Labouchere reflected ruefully, "all expletives are redundant and contrary to grammatical accuracy. Comedy

⁵¹ Terry, *Memoirs*, p. 163.

⁵² *Vide* the long analysis of the interpretation, Scott, "The Bells", pp. 240-243; and cf. Morris, *Essays*, p. 220; "Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum," *The Saturday Review* LIII, March 11, 1882, p. 300; "Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum," *Punch* LXXXII, March 18, 1882, p. 121; Labouchere, "That Baggage Juliet," *Truth* XI, March 16, 1882, pp. 376-377; Winter, *Shakespeare on the Stage II*, New York 1915, p. 132; George R. Foss, *What the Author Meant*, London 1932, p. 106.

—light comedy—is Ellen Terry's forte."⁵³ Spontaneity, timing, vivacity, perfection of movement, true lightness, were universally noted. The actress herself was typically dissatisfied and said years later: "I have played Beatrice hundreds of times, but not once as I know she ought to be played. I was never swift enough, not nearly swift enough at the Lyceum where I had a too deliberate, though polished and thoughtful Benedick in Henry Irving. But at least I did not make the mistake of being arch and skittish, and this encourages me to think I could have played Rosalind well."⁵⁴

When the Irving company had returned from its first American tour in 1884, Ellen Terry had still another chance to play a great Shakespearean role, Viola in *Twelfth Night*. Although the production as a whole was not successful and the play was not revived, because of Irving's refusal to play Malvolio as a comic part, everyone was satisfied with the actress, especially by her handling of the comedy scenes when Viola is in disguise.⁵⁵ But the combination of Irving's misconception and the lack of strength in the important parts of Olivia, Feste, Toby, and Andrew, prevented her from developing the interpretation. After several revivals of former Lyceum successes, Irving produced Wills's *Olivia*, with himself as the Vicar. In her old part, Ellen Terry provided a display of bravura acting to the delight of the critics who could recognize acting.⁵⁶ The actress felt that Irving's slowness hurt the play, a

⁵³ Labouchere, "Much Ado About Nothing," *Truth* XII, October 19, 1882, p. 550. Cf. Wedmore, "The Theatrical Revival," *The Nineteenth Century* XIII, February 1883, p. 223; Austin Brereton, *Dramatic Notes 1882-83*, London 1883, p. 52; Matthew Arnold, *Letters of an Old Playgoer*, New York 1919, pp. 45-46; Stoker, *Irving*, I, p. 101; Percy Fitzgerald, *Shakespearean Representation, Its Laws and Limits*, London 1908, p. 66; G. P. Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Maurice Baring, *The Puppet Show of Memory*, Boston 1922, p. 310; Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *A Player Under Three Reigns*, London 1925, p. 115.

⁵⁴ Terry, *Lectures*, p. 97; *vide ibidem*, pp. 83-96; *Life*, pp. 229-230.

⁵⁵ *Vide* for typical commendatory but strangely quiet reviews, Scott, "The Bells", p. 271; "Letters to Some People," *Punch* LXXXVII, July 19, 1884, p. 28; Austin Brereton, *Dramatic Notes 1884-1885*, London 1885, pp. 47-48; Labouchere, "At the Lyceum," *Truth* XVI, July 17, 1884, p. 93; Winter, *Irving*, p. 82.

⁵⁶ *Vide* Labouchere, "Olivia," *Truth* XVII, June 4, 1885, p. 885; Wedmore, "'Olivia' at the Lyceum," *The Academy* XXVII, June 13, 1885, p. 427; Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 218; Austin Brereton, *Dramatic Notes 1885*, London 1886, p. 42; Winter, "Our Play-Box," *The Theatre*, August 1885, pp. 91-92; Scott, "The Bells," p. 279.

point which Shaw noted in 1897 when that excellent actor, Hermann Vezin, resumed his part of Dr. Primrose. Shaw liked Ellen Terry's Olivia because it showed to the full "the originality and the modernity" of her histrionic talents which for him were obscured in her Shakespearean roles.⁵⁷

Of her next part, Ellen Terry wrote: "'Clap-trap' was the verdict passed by many on the Lyceum 'Faust,' yet Margaret was the part I liked better than any other—outside Shakespeare. I played it beautifully sometimes. The language was often very commonplace, but the character was all right,—simple, touching, real."⁵⁸ Her interest in and sympathy with the character communicated itself to the audience, but the shoddiness of the play resulted in her greatest moments being those of pure pantomime, notably her first entrance, the effect of which W. L. Courtney described as "electrical,"⁵⁹ while G. P. Bancroft described it recently as "supreme acting and to the audience almost past bearing."⁶⁰ Unfortunately this first entrance was entirely her own imposition on the play, and while critics sympathized with her and with the character, they found no moment equal in intensity or electrical power in the remainder of the play.⁶¹ The actress wrote that it "was abused a good deal as a pantomime, a distorted caricature of Goethe, and a thoroughly inartistic production. But it proved the greatest of all Henry's financial successes."⁶² She was too kind to add that it did not help her development as an actress, or that it was the beginning of Irving's turning more and more to the production of plays in which there were no parts for her genius to operate upon. His revival, for instance, of the old *Robert Macaire* of Charles Selby, always a favorite with him, left her with no work, and she produced at a special matinee in June 1887 *The Amber Heart*, a blank verse play by Alfred Calmour, which she admitted most people declared "rub-

⁵⁷ Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions*, II, pp. 167-168.

⁵⁸ Terry, *Memoirs*, pp. 183-184.

⁵⁹ W. L. Courtney, "Mr. Irving's *Faust*," *The Fortnightly Review* XLV, January 1886, p. 104.

⁶⁰ Bancroft, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁶¹ *Vide* Scott, "*The Bells*," pp. 292-293; Brereton, *Dramatic Notes* 1885, pp. 78-79; also the very unfavorable review, Joseph and Elizabeth R. Pennell, "The Acting in Mr. Irving's 'Faust,'" *The Century Magazine* XIII, December 1887, p. 313.

⁶² Terry, *Memoirs*, p. 185.

bish," but which contained in the leading role of Ellaline an opportunity for her to display some of her special talents. Irving, who had never bothered to watch her act except from the wings as Juliet, was delighted and immediately recognized that she was making acting bricks without dramatic straw,⁶³ and her biographer and secretary, Christopher St. John, noted her skill "in making a woman out of Calmour's sweetstuff."⁶⁴

After further engagements in America, Irving and Terry produced in 1888 possibly the most debated of all Lyceum productions, *Macbeth*. To his original conception of Macbeth as "a hypnotized soldier," Irving now added a further indignity: a Lady Macbeth "in reality the sweetest and most affectionate creature who ever drew breath," Labouchere declared, "an aesthetic, Burne-Jonesy, Grosvenor Gallery version of Lady Macbeth, who roars as gently as any sucking dove," who exhibited only "playfulness, tenderness, affection, and conjugal rapture," and who made of the sleep-walking scene "a pretty replica of the mad business of the distraught and dreamy-looking Ophelia." But Labouchere as usual complimented Irving on his business acumen, in ironically noting that "a Macbeth evolved from the psychology of the 'Newgate Calendar,' and a Lady Macbeth based on purely pre-Raphaelite principles" were box-office successes.⁶⁵ There is really something amusing in the idea of such treatment of two of the greatest tragic characters in drama, an amusement reflected in Shaw's comment, "I would trust my life in her hands,"⁶⁶ and in Maurice Baring's recollection of his father being "melted" by this Lady Macbeth, and murmuring, "The dear little child."⁶⁷ But the amusement is lessened when one remembers that this actress might so much better have been employed in playing Rosalind than in misconceiving Lady Macbeth and strangely insisting upon the conception as right, arguing again and again

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 190. Vide Henry Barton Baker, *The London Stage, Its History and Traditions from 1576 to 1888*, London 1889, II, pp. 68-70.

⁶⁴ Christopher St. John, note 3 to Chapter IX, Terry, *Memoirs*, p. 191.

⁶⁵ Labouchere, "Macbeth and His Wife," *Truth* XXV, January 3, 1889, p. 16.

⁶⁶ *London Music in 1888-89, as heard by Corno di Bassetto (later known as Bernard Shaw) with some further autobiographical particulars*, New York 1937, p. 97.

⁶⁷ Baring, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

for her own and against the Mrs. Siddons conception, even going so far as to try to make out that Mrs. Siddons had really conceived the part as she herself played it, but had somehow conveyed to her audiences the famous traditional interpretation.⁶⁸ There was, however, a deliberate rationalization in her appeal to Burne-Jones's satisfaction with her "because my acting appealed to his *eye*. Well, the drama is for the eye as well as for the ear and the mind."⁶⁹ That she knew very well that the drama, and the acting of great parts like Lady Macbeth, is not only for the eye, she showed over and over again in her comments upon her art. I think that we may safely conclude that her protesting too much that she was right and everyone else wrong was the reaction of a guilty artistic conscience. But if she had sinned against her art, she expiated her sin in her next two parts. Despite her usual tolerance of Irving, she permitted herself to be annoyed: "Here I was in the very noonday of life, fresh from Lady Macbeth and still young enough to play Rosalind," she wrote, "suddenly called upon to play a rather uninteresting mother in 'Dead Heart.'"⁷⁰ This old melodrama, produced in a highly spectacular manner, Irving revived because he liked "this 'piling up' sort of acting," and because it was "restful."⁷¹ Certainly Ellen Terry's art rested during the run of the piece, a long one, since it suited the tastes of the time for sensational and spectacular realism. She did not fare much better in Merivale's *Ravenswood*, adapted from Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor*, the last production of a new play at the Lyceum within our period. Merivale, she wrote, "gave me some lovely things to do in Lucy Ashton. I had to lose my poor wits, as in Ophelia, in the last act, and with hardly a word to say I was able to make an effect. The love scene at the well I did nicely too."⁷² She did her lovely things well, but they were little things. Labouchere wrote: "Miss Ellen Terry played the death-scene as few actresses

⁶⁸ *Vide* Terry, *Memoirs*, pp. 234-235; *Lectures*, pp. 160-163; Scott, *Terry*, pp. 116-121. Richard Mansfield claimed to have arrived independently at the Irving-Terry conception of Lady Macbeth; *vide* Paul Wilstach, *Richard Mansfield: the Man and the Actor*, New York 1909, p. 418.

⁶⁹ Terry, *Memoirs*, p. 235.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 236.

⁷² *Ibidem*, pp. 238-239.

could play it nowadays; in fact, so well that I wish Mr. Merivale could have trusted her with the real mad scene as written by Sir Walter Scott."⁷³ Wedmore also tried to discover beneath the flimsiness of the part a surer command of resources and a larger power of passion than the actress had hitherto shown,⁷⁴ but it was no part for the actress that Ellen Terry had shown herself to be by her work since her return to the stage in 1874. On the other hand, while the last two parts noted did not give her sufficient opportunity, her ability to get them across to audiences at all proved her capacities as an actress. It was easy to see in many of her Lyceum performances only the pictorial effects which she created so easily by her physical qualities, her grace, and her sense of pose. It took a very keen critic, like Shaw, to find her finer qualities: "The nervous athleticism and trained expertness which have enabled Miss Terry, without the least appearance of violence," he wrote in 1897, "to hold her audiences with an unflinching grip in a house which is no bandbox, and where really weak acting . . . drifts away under the stage door and leaves the audience coughing, are only known by their dissimulative effect: that is, they are not known at all for what they really are; whereas the pictorial business, five-sixths of which is done by trusting to nature, proceeds, as to the other sixth, by perfectly obvious methods."⁷⁵

But most of the critics, in their pleasure with the actress, overlooked her mastery of technique. "The critics," as her son Gordon Craig wrote not so very long ago, "all threw down their swords and played hoop with their shields; they said that

⁷³ Labouchere, "Ravenswood," *Truth* XXVIII, September 25, 1890, p. 617.

⁷⁴ Wedmore, "'Ravenswood' at the Lyceum," *The Academy* XXXVIII, October 18, 1890, p. 347.

⁷⁵ Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions*, II, 314. Cf. his preface to the *Correspondence*, p. x: "Ellen Terry's articulation was perfect. Her slightly veiled voice reached the remotest listener in the theatre without apparent effort." Bram Stoker ("The Art of Ellen Terry," *The Cosmopolitan Magazine* XXXI, July 1901, p. 243) wrote: "I do not know any better lesson for a young artist than to study Ellen Terry's method of delivery. . . . From the stage there is a surprising volume of sound—sound articulated, modulated, varied with every thought passing through the speaker's mind, but still sufficient to fill the vast expanse of a theater and penetrate to every corner of it." The trouble in taking lessons from her method had been suggested earlier by Shaw: her imitators caught only at "the staccato articulation;" *vide London Music*, p. 270.

she was beyond criticism.”⁷⁶ Shaw in 1898 inveighed against his critical brethren for regarding her acting as “mere efflorescences of her personal charm,” and pointed out that the charm “includes a good deal of industriously acquired skill. It ought to be called artistic conscience.”⁷⁷ But the myth of the Terry charm persisted throughout her career, and was even accompanied by the belief that she did not possess art at all; whereas by the exercise of technical means she was constantly overcoming limitations, physical limitations, limitations of voice, limitations of poor parts, limitations of too large a playhouse, limitations of every kind. We must not lose sight of the charm, it was real, it shines forth gloriously in her memoirs and in her correspondence and in her lectures; indeed, during her acting career, it was so strong that, as Shaw wrote: “Although she was soundly skilled in the technique of her profession she never needed to perform any remarkable feat of impersonation: the spectators would have resented it: they did not want Ellen Terry to be Olivia Primrose: they wanted Olivia Primrose to be Ellen Terry.”⁷⁸ But he would have been the first to admit that Ellen Terry herself was a magnificent piece of impersonation, the product of nature and art combined. She concealed the art so cleverly that it seemed natural to many,⁷⁹ but those who were themselves of the theatre recognized, as did her son, that her art consisted in largeness and completeness of technical mastery, not in emphasis

⁷⁶ Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Shaw, *Dramatic Opinions*, II, p. 452-453.

⁷⁸ Shaw, preface to *Correspondence*, p. xiv. For some typical comments upon the actress as the epitome of untrained personality, of the triumph of charm, *vide* Edward R. Russell, “Mr. Irving’s Work,” *The Fortnightly Review* XLII, September 1884, p. 410; G. E. Montgomery, “Miss Ellen Terry,” in Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton, *Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and the United States. V. The Present Time*, New York 1886, pp. 250, 256-257; Robert Buchanan, “The Modern Drama and Its Minor Critics,” *The Contemporary Review* LVI, December 1889, p. 923; Norman Hapgood, *The Stage in America 1897-1900*, New York 1901, p. 368; Doris Arthur Jones, *Taking the Curtain Call. The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones*, New York 1930, p. 330; C. C. Hoyer Millar, *George du Maurier and Others*, London 1937, pp. 128-129.

⁷⁹ *Vide* Craig’s fine analysis of her art, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166, and comment upon that analysis by Stark Young, “Ellen Terry Again,” *The New Republic* LXXII, p. 287, October 26, 1932.

upon this detail or that of technical particularity.⁸⁰ Craig tried to make the distinction between the two kinds of technique: "Her performances were not *made*, in the same sense as Irving's were," he wrote. "It seemed the easiest thing in the world to do, and the unskillful supposed it as easy as it seemed, and that being easy, it could not be acting—it must be what is called 'natural.'"⁸¹ And so Ellen Terry was claimed as the genius of the new school.

Even Bram Stoker, who knew her well enough to know better, asserting she was the product of "the age of investigation," allied her with "those who brought in the new school of natural acting." Immediately upon this pronouncement he proceeded to call attention to her old school training, her "boldness and breadth," her "realisation of poetic atmosphere and that perspective of the stage which is so much stronger than that of real life." Having thus thoroughly endowed her with old school virtues, he tried to explain in what way she helped to establish the new school: "She enlarged the bounds of art from those of convention to those of nature; and in doing so gave fuller scope to natural power," and enabled later actresses to express themselves "who otherwise would have been early strangled in the meshes of convention."⁸² This idea is intriguing, but not, I think, convincing. The real actress is unlikely to be "strangled in the meshes of convention." Ellen Terry herself was very careful to think through any problem that presented itself to her mind. Living in an age that prided itself upon its realism of the moment, she sought the realism of universality: "Realism?" she asked. "Yes, if we mean by that real feeling, real sympathy. But people seem to mean by it only the realism of low-down things."⁸³ Living in an age that prided itself upon its "reserved force," she had herself been the victim of it in Coghlan's abortive Shylock, and she saw the value of the principle only when it had real meaning:

We often prate of "reserved force." Salvini had it, for the simple reason that his was the gigantic force which may be re-

⁸⁰ *Vide, e. g.,* Geneviève Ward and Richard Whiteing, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, London 1918, pp. 248-249, for a sister-artist's recognition of Ellen Terry's industry and accomplishment.

⁸¹ Craig, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁸² Stoker, *Irving*, II, pp. 201-202.

⁸³ Terry, *Lectures*, p. 15.

strained because of its immensity. Men have no need to dunt up a little punting book. If they do it in acting, it is tame, absurd and pretentious. But Salvini held himself in, and still his groan was like a tempest, his passion huge.⁸⁴

Living in the age of actor-managers with their stunt playing and *trucs de scène*, she objected when people praised her for playing Carina in *The Cup* and Letitia Hardy in *The Belle's Stratagem* in one evening, and definitely pointed the objection at Irving's habit of playing the melodramatic Mathias and the comic Jingle together:

A *tour de force* is always more interesting to the looker-on than to the person who is taking part in it. One feels no pride in such an achievement, which ought to be possible to any one calling himself an actor. Personally, I never play comedy and tragedy on the same night without a sense that one is spoiling the other. Harmonies are more beautiful than contrasts in acting as in other things—and more difficult, too.⁸⁵

Belonging to a profession that has a tendency in any period to be satisfied with itself, and belonging to it during a period when it regarded itself with the complacency typical of its age, she not only tried always to improve her work, not only always listened to criticism of herself, from any source, but, unlike Irving, who refused to see others act, unlike Madge Kendal, who went to see others act in order to scorn them, she tried also to see all the acting she could, and she lamented that "We are the only artists who never see the art work we are producing. I would give ten years of my life to see myself act, that I might learn what to avoid."⁸⁶

I am not suggesting that wisdom and perception of the right means necessarily implies wise action and performance by the right methods. But in a study of this kind, it is certainly worth emphasizing the fact that what success she attained was the result of training her natural gifts by the methods of a now discarded system of technique and tradition. We have noted how many observers failed to perceive the technique because the personality was so strong. Those who appreciated the technique were too likely to hold the personality at an under-estimate, to declare her a great artist, that is, a splendid technician, but not a great actress. It is strange

⁸⁴ Terry, *Life*, p. 204.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 200.

⁸⁶ Benson, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178.

how the idea persists that the truly great actor or actress is the one who completely loses himself or herself in each impersonation, for the history of acting shows that every acknowledged great practitioner of the art has been endowed with a strong and compelling and recognizable personality. Yet so balanced a critic as J. Ranken Towse in his notice of Ellen Terry's death, trying to fix her place in the history of the theatre, objected that "Her power of tragic utterance was insignificant and her command of versatility was small."⁸⁷ In all her impersonations her technical execution was beautifully finished, but in none of them was there any suppression, or indeed much disguise of her own individual personality." Yet Towse's conclusion was one of the fairest and most complete yet made of the actress:

Ellen Terry, though not the greatest actress . . . was the most illustrious female figure upon the English-speaking stage for the greater part of the Victorian era. She achieved this preeminence partly by a personal fascination which may be called, without exaggeration, extraordinary, partly by her consummate artistry. This artistry she acquired in the course of a long and arduous training in good stock companies, and in all kinds of drama, an experience from which modern players, under the system prevailing in our commercial theater, are hopelessly barred. That is why we have so few really competent actors, perhaps none of her class. Herein lies the chief and deplorable significance of her death. She was probably the last survivor of a great histrionic school and has left no recognizable successor.⁸⁸

So far as the argument concerning her greatness as an actress is concerned, if we must make the distinction between artist and actress, I have a strong feeling that there is no reason why we should expect a Herrick to be capable of the work of a Milton, or a Marie Bancroft or an Ellen Terry of the work of a Siddons. A critic who took the same view that Towse did, Forrest Izard, admitted that Terry's Portia and Beatrice were "the finest of her time, probably the finest the

⁸⁷ For what it is worth, consider the claim made by Christopher St. John (*Ellen Terry*, London 1907, p. 86) that by playing Lady Macbeth and Mme. Sans-Gene, Ophelia and Nancy Oldfield, Desdemona and Volumnia, Beatrice and Katherine of Aragon, Cordelia and Hermione, Portia and the heroines of Barrie and Shaw, Margaret (in *Faust*) and Letitia Hardy, Ellen Terry did make some arguable bid for the possession of versatility of no mean order.

⁸⁸ Towse, "Ellen Terry," *Nation* CXXVII, p. 133.

stage has yet seen.”⁸⁹ And Max Beerbohm, in the course of a long and brilliant analysis of the quality of her genius in 1906, sensibly suggested that in the greatness of her Portia and her Beatrice lay her final claim to greatness. Beerbohm was writing of her appearance in Shaw’s *Captain Brassbound’s Conversion*, and he insisted that Ellen Terry’s comparative failure in this play and in Barrie’s *Alice-Sit-by-the Fire* did not affect her claim to supremacy in her profession. Her style was too large, he felt, for such plays. “She needs a Shakespeare to stand up to her,” he wrote. “But to excel in Shakespearean comedy, as she excels, is to be authentically a great actress.”⁹⁰ I think it has been demonstrated that granting the Terry charm, granting a fund of personal genius, Ellen Terry was able to convert that charm and that genius into the qualities which made her “authentically a great genius” through the exercise of demonstrable technique, carefully acquired and carefully trained. Although they may have represented, as Gordon Craig thought, two kinds of technique, two varieties of its expression, it was the sound training, it was still the sound training of the old school that made possible for both “those great Lyceum days when she and the mighty Irving, high above their fellows, looked down upon the pygmies who toiled in their art so far beneath.”⁹¹

⁸⁹ Izard, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁹⁰ Max Beerbohm, “A Great Dear,” *The Saturday Review* CI, March 24, 1906, p. 360.

⁹¹ Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

FAIR-TEXTED LAMENTABLE VERSE

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Stick the Herse
With a fair-texted lamentable verse,
More sorry than the Makers.

With these words Francis Quarles¹ recognized the relative poetic merit of the funereal verse of his day. The tide of verse rose high in Elizabethan England; and popular ballads, broadsides, and funeral tributes indicated how prodigally it spilled over into the commoner walks of life. Almost any public event might stir unpoetic persons into metrical activity; and professional versifiers reaped a profit from the demand, recompounding many a hackneyed metaphor for each occasion. So common was funeral verse that relatives and friends might be observed tacking rhymed tributes on the hearse as the procession moved down the street, or hanging memorial lines over the tombs for the curious to read. The tradition lingers still in occasional newspaper tributes more sincere than poetic. Thus Leonato, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, hopes to preserve some remembrance of his Hero:

If your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones.²

Lamentable verse it was, much of it—stereotyped, inflated, often palpably insincere, at times unduly prolonged. Quarles used other phrases: “studied tears,” “mercenary Affections,” “flowers of bare Invention.” His was the poet’s scorn of occasional verse.

George Puttenham, writing in 1589 his *Arte of English Poesie*, was irritated by the confusion of this funeral verse with the epitaph proper. The epitaph, he insisted, should be short: “an inscription such as a man may commodiously write or engrave upon a tombe in a few verses, prithee, quicke

¹ *Works of Francis Quarles*. Ed. A. B. Grosart, 3 vols, 1880, III, p. 11.

² V, i, 291.

and sententious for the passer by to peruse, and judge vpon without any long tariaunce."³ Perhaps the experience of having been locked once in a cathedral as he tarried to read an epitaph lent conviction to his definition of terms:

If it exceede the measure of an Epigram, it is then . . . rather an Elegie than an Epitaph which errorr many of these bastard rimers commit, because they be not learned . . . for they make long and tedious discourses, and write them in large tables to be hanged vp in Churches and chauncells over the tombes of great men and others, which be so exceeding long as one must have halfe a dayes leasure to reade one of them, and must be called away before he come halfe to the end, or else be locked into the Church by the sexten, as I my selfe was once served reading an Epitaph in a certain cathedrall Church of England. . . . They might better call them Elegies . . . I have seene them vpon many honorable tombes of these late times erected, which doe rather disgrace than honour either the matter or the maker.⁴

Elegies on the classical model had been a commonplace in Latin and in continental languages since the publication of Theocritus in Italy in 1481, and the succeeding editions of Bion and Moschus. The formula became monotonous repetition: herds roaming without a shepherd; Hermes, Pan, and others in procession before dying Daphnis, to ask why the grief or to mourn and complain against heaven, or to reflect on the riddle of existence; then the final "Peace, he is not dead"—all with a fine confusion of pagan and Christian symbol.⁵ This tradition made possible Spenser's *Daphnaïda*, Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais* and Arnold's *Thyrsis*; and Gray could ring a romantic variation on the form.

The "funeral elegy" is a humbler member of a large family. The labels range widely—eclogue, exequy, epicides, obsequy, threnody, monody, lament, ode, requiem. Most of them are rather consistently mere "funeral song," characteristically in pentameter couplet, a combination of epitaph and broadside, closer to popular verse than to classical models. Their interest is less esthetic than sociological, their antecedents are nearer the cruder epitaph than the classical elegy, and their platitudes are those of popular morality.

³ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, 1589. Ed. Edward Arber, London 1869, p. 70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁵ See George Norlin, "The Convention of the Pastoral Elegy". *American Journal of Philology*, XXXII, pp. 294-312.

Metrically, their history is linked with that of the heroic couplet. Before 1600 the pentameter couplet appears to have been a characteristic form. Puttenham comments on this fact. The rhymed five-foot couplet is, in fact, very old in English, though the strict heroic form, as special studies show, is a seventeenth century development. These studies, however, have not stressed the wide-spread popularity of couplet rhymes in pentameter in broadside elegies, perhaps well before its appearance in the more formal writers of the late sixteenth century. Donne's earlier *Epicedes and Obsequies*, written, according to Grierson, between 1593 and 1598, are all in five-foot rhymed couplet lines, though not closed, as are also his *Elegies* of some fifteen years later. Indeed, Nicholas Grimald, as early as 1548, uses actual closed couplets on occasion (perhaps as a translator from the French), notably in his "Upon the Deceas of W. Ch," a poem reprinted in *Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557. But the metrical matter is the subject of more special studies. Let us mention only in passing the also popular "poulter's measure," a couplet rhyme of alternating sixes and sevens, a peculiarly galloping measure, perhaps a popular modification of ballad forms, such as formed a bridge between folk measures and literary verse.

One of the earliest examples of funeral verse is found in the above mentioned Grimald. In a "funeral song" upon his mother Annes, written in 1555, he makes use of the couplet rhyme. After conventionally reviewing the part played by women in classical history, he sketches his childhood and pictures his mother making linen clothes "with those fyngers fyne." His mother is characterized through the eyes of neighbors and household:

Hearyng the chaunce, your neybouris made much mone;
A dear-worth dame, they thought theyr comfort gone.
Kinswoomen wept; your charge, the maydens wept;
Your daughters wept, whom you so well had kept.
But my good syre gave, with soft woords, releef;
And clokes, with outward chere his inward greef,
Lest, by his care, your sickness should augment,
And on his case your thoughtfull hert be bent.⁶

⁶ L. R. Merrill, *The Life and Poems of Nicholas Grimald*, Yale Studies, No. 69, 1925.

Then follows the customary idea that the monument will be verse, not marble:

Have, mother, monuments of our sore smart . . .
But wayful verse, and doolful song accept.

Already Grimald leads us to suspect that "funeral verse" is much more firmly established and rooted in English tradition than research could hope to prove.

Of a different nature is an anonymous ballad-epitaph on Lord Henry Wrisley, dated 1581, in the romping "poulter's measure." It is at once a sample of folk elegy and a picture of the ideal nobleman.

In iustice was his ioye, and iustly he did deale,
As they can tell that for his aide had cause for to appeale;
The widow poore opprest he carefully did shield,
And to the orphane in his right did dayly comfort yeeld;
The needie poore he fed with mutton, bread, and beefe,
His hand was never slack to give the comfortlesse releese;
The naked back to cloth he ever ready was,
No needy poore without reward from this earles gate could
pas; . . .
Unto his tennauntes poore this earle was ever kinde,
To work their weale he carefully did always yeeld his minde;
Inhaunsing of his rentes did ne enlarge his store,
He alwaies had a care to help and aide his farmers pore;
His seruantes weale to work no time he did forbear,
To doo them good that wel deseru'd his zeale did still appeare.
. . . 7

This note of appreciation of the generous noble is often repeated in the funeral elegy. Not so different, for example, is an elegy on Sir Thomas Lea by William Strode, a half century later:

All sorts of them that want, your tears now lend:
A House-Keeper, a Patron, and a Friend
Is lodged in clay. The man whose table fedde
So many while he lived, since hee is dead
Himselfe is turn'd to food; whose chimney burn'd
So freely then, is now to ashes turn'd. . .
Such descants poore men make; who miss him more
Than sixe great men, that keeping house before
After a spurt unconstantly are fledd
Away to London.⁸

Quarles, too, begins an elegy with

⁷ *Ancient Ballads and Broad-sides*. London 1867, pp. 262-263.

⁸ *Poetical Works of William Strode*. Ed. Bertram Dobell. London 1907, pp. 71-73.

The Church hath lost a Patron; and the State
A loyall Servant: and the Poore, a Friend.

But we may be pardoned for suspecting a formula when he writes in another elegy:

The Church hath lost a Patron; and the State
Bewails an honourable Potentate . . .
Reader, the Poore shall tell thee to their cost,
He was the Cripple's *Staffe*; the blind man's Eye.⁹

Sometimes there is a note of democracy, in praise of the untitled man; more often, there is obsequiousness and conventional phrase, and forced conceit. Consider, in the age of conceits, Lovelace's lines on his brother. The subject hardly matters; the lines can scarcely ring true:

May the Great *Eye* of *Day* weep out his light,
Pale *Cynthia* leave the Regiment of Night,
The *Galaxia* all in Sables Dight,
Send forth no corruscations to our Sight,
The *Sister-graces* and the sacred *Nine*
Statu'd with grief, attend upon his shrine . . .
Did I pronounce him dead! no no, he lives,
And from his *Aromatique* cell, he gives
Spice-Breathed Fame, whose Oderiferous scent
(In *Zephire-gales* which never can be spent)
Doth spread it self abroad, and much out-vies,
The Eastern Bird in her self-Sacrifice.¹⁰

Or observe these impudent lines of Francis Beaumont to a lady whom the poet has never even seen:

I never sawe thye face; nor did my hart
Urge forth mine eyes unto it whilst thou were,
But being lifted hence, that, to thee
Was Death's sad dart, prov'd Cupids shaft to me.¹¹

John Donne was not above like insincerities. In over two hundred and fifty lines on Lord Harrington, written, it is said, to please Lady Bedford, Donne's forced ingenuities conclude with the assertion that his Muse for grief has "spoke her last," a conclusion apparently not even remotely true. The death of Prince Henry in 1612 evoked almost a record amount

⁹ Quarles, *op. cit.*, III, 11, 36.

¹⁰ *The Poems of Lovelace*. Ed. C. H. Wilkinson, Oxford 1930, p. 212.

¹¹ Quoted, *Poems of Donne*. Ed. H. J. C. Grierson, Oxford 1912, II,

of elegiac verse. Donne's contribution claimed that reason and faith were shattered by the event. But tradition has it that "Jonson told Drummond 'that Donne said to him, he wrott that Epitaph on Prince Henry *Look to Me, Faith* to match Sir Ed. Herbert in obscureness.'" ¹²

A lady drowned is said to have returned a Venus to the expectant waves. A poet dies, and the eulogist wonders if the "Poetick heaven" can still continue its golden dance "when the first mover's gon." A favorite conceit is that the fame of the deceased is sufficient *marble* for all time. Milton makes use of this conceit in his funeral elegy on Shakespeare (not a sonnet, as often carelessly assumed). And surely Donne wrote this tribute with his tongue in his cheek:

She sinn'd, but just enough to let us see
That God's word must be true, All, sinners be . . .
How fit for us, how even and how sweet,
How good in all her titles, and how meet,
To have reform'd this forward heresie,
That women can no parts of friendship bee;
How Morall, how Divine shall not be told,
Lest they that heare her vertues, thinke her old.¹³

But these are elaborations of experienced poets. Among the lesser versifiers, or in the poets temporarily laboring to produce lines at demand, the dominant impression is one of the absence of any divine afflatus. How appalling it can be as verse is sufficiently illustrated by a few lines from Josuah Sylvester's tribute to one Dame Helen Branch:

Then after modest and meet intermission,
Becoming well her years and her condition,
In second wedlock shee was linkt again
Unto another wealthy citizen
To master *Branch*, who afterwards became
Lord Mayor of London, worthy well the same.¹⁴

Out of much like banality emerges something like a pattern of middle-class respectability as it was viewed by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Sylvester reviews in tedious verse the life of a lady of the last decade of the sixteenth century: her marriage, widowhood, second marriage,

²² Quoted *Ibid.*, II, 205.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I, 281.

¹⁴ *Works of Josuah Sylvester*. Ed. A. B. Grosart, London 1880, II, 330.

second widowhood, retirement into meditation, alms, and church attendance:

A godly, vertuous and religious Matron,
For maids, and wives, and widows, all, a pattern.

It is Sylvester again who sums up the Puritan ideal in his portrait of a young lady:

Such exercise of every *Hous-wife's* part,
Such honest *shift*, such *thrift*, such *use*, such *art*;
Such *modesty*, such *gravity*, such *grace*,
Such *speech*, such *silence* (suiting time and place);
Such due *devotion*, such *discretion* seen,
She seemed nearer *sixty* than *sixteen* . . .
Still keeping home; still tasked, sober-wise,
In *Hus-wife's Use*, or holy exercise,
Or, if at length shee looked out of Door,
'Twas but to visit some weake, aged Poor; . . .
Or, on the *Sabbaths*, or the *Lecture-dayes*,
To *hear*, and *learn*, to *read*, and *pray*, and *praise*.¹⁵

Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda, gives a similar portrait of a citizen's wife, "meek as a virgin, prudent as a wife." Orinda was fond of prudent women, if we may judge by her constant use of the adjective. Sylvester's lady is still the model a generation later:

Her zeal was primitive and practice too;
She did believe, and pray, and read, and do. . .¹⁶

Orinda discovers similar virtues in a friend's husband, and incidentally glances in reproof at the gallant:

So pious, just, noble, discreet, kind. . .
His strong religion not on trifles spent,
Was useful, firm, early, and eminent.
Never betray'd to indigested heat,
Nor yet entic'd from what was safely great. . .
Unlike those gallants who so use their time,
As opportunity to act their crime,
And lost in wine or vanity when young,
They die too soon, because they liv'd too long.¹⁷

Even certain ladies can come in for caustic asides, as witness John Davies' digression:

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 292.

¹⁶ Katherine Philips in *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*. Ed. George Saintsbury, Oxford 1905, etc.; I, 532.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 584 f.

They *face* and *breast* with that fair *blush* o'erflow
Which *Modestie* (not *Bashfulness*) doth owe.

In these bold *Times* it's held a *Tricke* too fresh
Of unbred *Indians*, so to paint the *flesh*
For any cause; but, this is but th' *effect*
Of *Impudence*, the *Times* *soules* chief *affect*.¹⁸

One wonders, too, what lay behind this unusual note in Bishop King's elegy on Mr. Edward Holt, what parental injustice:

Whether thy Fathers, or diseases rage
More mortal prov'd to thy unhappy age,
Our sorrow need not question; since the first
Is known for length and sharpness much the worse. . .
Thy Feaver yet was kind; which the ninth day
For thy misfortunes made an easie way
When th' other barbarous and Hectick fit,
In nineteen winters did not intermit.¹⁹

It would be strange if in all the funeral verse of a century there should not be some to strike the reader as genuine or touching. Through Bishop King's "Exequy" for his wife, for example, runs a current of personal grief that forces its way despite the conceit of the lady's being a book, a library, which the poet reads with "wet glasses." William Strode's two elegies on Mistress Mary Prideux, a child of seven carried off too early, recreate in some measure the small figure:

Thou werste all musicke: all thy limbs
Were but so many well sett hymnes
To prayse thy Maker. In thy browe
I read thy soule, and know not how
To tell which whiter was or smoother.

Or note his first on the same child, arguing that we die but when Nature has brought us to maturity, and that the child was a summer fruit, early mature:

Weigh the composure of her pretty partes:
Her gravity in childhood; all her artes
Of womanly behaviour; weigh her tongue
So wisely mesurde, not too short nor long.

In a brief epitaph, he returned again to the child:

She was fayre.
Fresh as Morning, sweete as Ayre.²⁰

¹⁸ *Works of John Davies*. Ed. A. B. Grosart. London 1880, II, 64.

¹⁹ *The Poems of Bishop Henry King*. Ed. John Sparrow, London 1925, p. 62.

²⁰ Strode, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.

In the days of the Civil War, epitaphs and elegies served to express partisan feeling. Henry Vaughan scores

Those vast pretenders, which of late
Swell'd in the ruins of their King and State.²¹

And Bishop King, unflinching Royalist, writes in capitals that carry his conviction of Charles the First, "the BEST OF KINGS as BEST OF MEN." In another elegy on Charles, feelingly entitled "A Deepe Groane Fetch'd at the Funerall of that incomparable and Glorious Monarch," he labels his monarch martyr and saint,

"Inviting *Treason* with a pardoning looke
Instead of *Gratitude*, a *stab* He tooke.²²

But Andrew Marvell's tribute to Cromwell is equally eulogistic:

Whose greater *Truths* obscure the *Fables* old,
Whether of *British Saints* or *Worthy's* told;
And in a valour less'ning *Arthur's* deeds,
For Holyness the *Confessor* exceeds. . .
Valour, religion, friendship, prudence dy'd
At once with him, and all that's good beside.²³

The bitterer note, as was natural, appeared in the laments of the defeated Royalists. Perhaps, too, the Royalist point of view appeared oftener because, aside from the towering Milton, the Puritans had not many versifiers in their ranks.

One of the minor curiosities of this period is Cowley's tribute to Crashaw as "poet and saint" who purified poetry of its paganism:

Still the old *Heathen Gods* in *Numbers* dwell,
The *Heav'nliest* thing on Earth still keeps up Hell. . .
And though *Pans Death* long since all *Oracles* broke,
Yet still in Rhyme the *Fiend Apollo* spoke.²⁴

Cowley's admiration more frequently goes, however, to wide learning, an understandable preference in the light of his own varied attainments. He praises a teacher for making men of boys. He praises Sir Henry Wooten for bringing

²¹ *Works of Henry Vaughan*. Ed. L. C. Martin, Oxford 1914, I. 50.

²² King, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

²³ *Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*. Ed. H. H. Margoliouth, Oxford 1927, I, 123-131.

²⁴ Abraham Cowley, *Poems*. Ed. A. R. Waller, Cambridge 1905, p. 48.

learning and wisdom from his travels; and Mr. William Hervey inspires his enthusiasm:

Knowledge he only sought, and so soon caught,
As if for him *Knowledge* had rather sought.

The poet and Hervey spent their days

Not in toys, in lusts, or wine;
But search in deep *Philosophy*,
Wit, *Eloquence*, and *Poetry*,
Arts which I lov'd, for they, my *Friend*, were *Thine*. . .

His *Mirth* was the pure *Spirits* of various *Wit*,
Yet never did his *God* or *Friends* forget.
And when deep talk and wisdom came in view,
Retir'd and gave to them their due.
For the rich help of *Books* he always took,
Though his own searching mind before
Was so with *Notions* written ore
As if wise *Nature* had made that her *Book*.²⁵

As a digression, one might mention that this same elegy contains a premature romantic note curiously reminiscent of Poe, especially:

Till the Ledaean Stars so fam'd for Love,
Wondered at us from above.

But we have come a long way from the simple lines of Nicholas Grimald on his mother Annes. These lines of Cowley were never stuck on a "Herse." By the mid-seventeenth century, funeral verse is more likely to appear in a small volume distributed among friends. In such a volume Milton's *Lycidas* shone like a rare gem amid dull, inferior stones. The lesser stones were the more numerous, nearer to the popular mind, closer to the social patterns of the day. As literature, the funeral elegies have little to recommend them. There is much chaff with but few grains. Even as documentary evidence they do not offer much, for they repeat hackneyed platitudes of morality and respectability. Probably this passing glance, brief as it is, is as much as they deserve.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-37.

THE CASE FOR MAXWELL ANDERSON

JAMES L. SANDOE

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[In a theatre eagerly preoccupied with investigation of such contemporary phenomena as the back-biting hostesses of Washington, the rogues of the copy desk, the condition of stevedores and the aspirations of the Footlights Club, what place can there be for such eccentrics as a hobo who talks about the "driven snow of Victorian literature," a Malay princess married to a Salem black-sheep, an idealist who owns a mountain top, or the Austrian Crown Prince?]

It is unfortunate to draw comparisons between Maxwell Anderson and William Shakespeare; Anderson himself is a man who would not comfortably countenance any such suggestion. And although some of his admirers have pressed a modest comparison, this has led some of his detractors to urge comparisons of another and less happy sort, and one based upon language and metrics which is manifestly unjust. Noting the difficulty of such comparisons, I shall nevertheless draw one or two: not because the playwrights are comparable in stature, but because they are comparable in aim and in attack, and because Shakespeare's characters are familiar enough to make such comparisons quickly meaningful.

What an audience of this day finds in the Hamlet of three hundred years ago is (all qualifications noted) what the audience of today finds in the Mio of *Winterset*, in Oparre whose wingless victory, like Rudolph Hapsburg's, is only materially wingless and, like Hamlet's, spiritually exalted.

This very exaltation, I take it, is the factor which sets the plays of Maxwell Anderson above those of his prose contemporaries and above his own prose plays. Verse is and always has been the medium through which man's essential hopes have been most eloquently expressed. Prose can be made to ring, it can be made to soar; like verse it may swell into an heroic lament or a courageous questioning of the stars. Noël Coward, who goes in and out of fashion regularly, achieved his most ringing fame with *Cavalcade*, the concluding toast of which is admirably contrived:

First of all, my dear, I drink to you. Loyal and loving always. Now, then, let's couple the future of England with the past of England. The glories and triumphs that are over,

and the sorrows that are over, too. Let's drink to our sons who made part of the pattern and to our hearts that died with them. Let's drink to the spirit of gallantry and courage that made a strange Heaven out of unbelievable Hell, and let's drink to the hope that one day this country of ours, which we love so much, will find dignity and greatness and peace again.

But it is an oddly true reflection that here, as elsewhere, the more prose strives to speak with eloquence and particular force, the more it turns to repeated measures, to the music of repeated and antiphonal sound, to—in short—the materials of verse.

Despite this perhaps "poetic" tendency of prose at more coherent moments in modern plays, a streamline language prevails on the popular stage. Playwrights in large measure ostensibly and even ostentatiously avoid any such heightened and refined statement, any such exaltation of spirit as that found, for instance, in the final moment of understanding in *Winterset*:

MIO. Whatever streets I walk, you'll walk them too From now on, and whatever roof or stars I have to house me, you shall share my roof and stars and morning. I shall not forget. MIRIAMNE. MIO. And keep you. And this to remember! if I should die, Miriamne, this half-hour is our eternity. I came here seeking light in darkness, running from the dawn, and stumbled on a morning.	Forget? God keep you!
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The modern playwright in prose is customarily far less coherent (just as men are in what is called "real life"), chiefly because when we risen-apes have accomplished such an understanding we have rather the feeling that something *should* be said than the words in which to say it best. Thus, the lover says, "I sorta like you baby" if he is a very outspoken fellow, or commits a blunt circumlocution which the lady is supposed to recognize and translate.

There is a cult currently of understatement. It shows itself in what has been called the "eyebrow school" of playing, which seeks to enfold worlds of suffering in the turn of a head, the lift of a finger, and which, at an emotional crisis, is likelier to commit a brief profanity and smash a vase than express its wrath with the enormous force and effect of, say,

an Oparre. Thus, when Larita Whittaker in Coward's *Easy Virtue* becomes finally fed up with the smug self-sufficiency of her husband's eagerly disapproving family, she tips over a small plaster copy of the Venus de Milo which is to her a kind of symbol—unwilling symbol, surely—of their smug settlement, and stalks wordless out of the room. It is no doubt a closer portion of common experience to represent a heroine in a crisis as fumbling for words and saying only "You . . . you . . . cad!" than to permit her the more ideal and vastly more satisfying expression of Oparre when that Malayan Medea faces the materially moral New England elders.

At such times the clogs of naturalism become most palpable and the lets and stays of realism unimportant, negligible rules, imposed as blindly as the elaborate rules by which Dryden governed his stiff heroic dramas and Rymer criticized *Othello*.

II

The critics of these latest plays of Maxwell Anderson persist on the one hand in caviling at him for what they call too nebulous faith and, on the other hand, in urging him to come more closely to grips with reality, with the problems of the day. In terms ostentatiously clear in themselves as phrases, but worn and battered into a series of tin *clichés* by steady, dinning repetition, they beg him to give up "defeatism" for a more positive credo. What they mean if they would conquer the fear they have of oversimplification is that Anderson would plead for—not even Communism against Fascism but something smaller, illustrative but confined. They want him "socially conscious," not seeing that he has gone beyond smaller battles to the great ones these wranglings represent thinly and too angrily. He is dealing with universals, with characters who have no need to be pinned to a place and a time but are of all time and all mankind.

And Anderson himself is the best argument against the critics who plead for what is come to be known as a proper "social consciousness" which, in little, means hot advocacy of some popular or unpopular current cause. A decade ago Anderson, like a good many other citizens, was angry and fret-

ful over the decision against Sacco and Vanzetti. In angry expression he wrote, with a collaborator who shared his fury, a play called *Gods of the Lightning*. There, as in so many more recent propaganda pieces (and most things written with fury) the characters are flatly and wholly either good or bad. If they are good they surpass the saints in goodness (for even the saints, a number of them and certainly the more popular, had at least youthful shortcomings, while Simon Peter's lasted well on into his age and made him, as we are inclined to say, "more human")—they surpass the saints in goodness when they are good, these characters, and they out-Herod Herod when they are bad. Brutal, hypocritical, grasping, the villains, like those in *Waiting for Lefty* and in *Stevardore* and in *Judgment Day* and the rest, settle themselves rather in the galleries devoted to caricature than those presenting reasonable portraiture.

Gods of the Lightning (again like several of these later and more popular plays) is ingeniously contrived to catch and sway one's feelings, to lash them into active detestation of the villains and clamorous protestation on behalf of the innocent-abused. It is theatrically effective and while it plays, plays with effect upon one's feelings. But its bias is so great that directly the lights go up in the house, one begins to question the sense of the upheaval and to hold it under suspicion of gross prejudice.

Ten years later (or nearly so) Maxwell Anderson employed certain materials from the Sacco-Vanzetti case in another play, *Winterset*. But in the intervening decade Anderson grew less restive and more objective about his material; instead of writing in white fury (as Sidney Kingsley urged him to) against the pernicious forces of Fascism and for the greater cause of Communism, he has written with the sympathetic detachment of *Society*.

Now *Society's* sympathies would not be withheld from, say, Sacco and Vanzetti, if they were wronged as their counterparts are in *Gods of the Lightning*. But in an interested zeal, Anderson stacked the cards against them and demanded sympathy, pleaded for it. Anderson does not demand sympathy for Mio and Mio himself does not ask for it. On the other hand, we do not withhold it.

In divorcing himself from a specific Cause, Anderson al-

lied himself with the creator of Hamlet and Macbeth, Othello and Richard II. We see and weep for Hamlet, not as Prince of Denmark, but as a human being caught in a web essentially of his own making, from which he is unable to extricate himself. We weep for Richard not because he loses his crown, but because in the loss of it he gains, too late, a manhood, a self-realization, a stature and character which he had not, earlier.

Similarly we sympathize with Mio not because he is an imaginary son of a railroaded innocent, but because he is eaten by a great desire for revenge which is honourable but which, as he discovers too late, is immoral in its very zeal. His death, like that of Miriamne, is rather fortuitous than necessary, but even his death does not move us as does his realization of his own wrong in his determined right.

Mr. Kingsley and Mr. Edmund Wilson querelously demand more attention on the part of Anderson to the pressing problems of the race; but while Mr. Kingsley has been fiddling effectively but rather speciously and with a sly pretense at causelessness, with East River waifs and their spoiled rich neighbours, Anderson has been examining the eternal verities. He is his own argument against "hitching his Muse to the Marxist plow."

Critics accuse Anderson of the new sin of "defeatism." Now "defeatism" is as vague and loosely used a term as "Fascism" and "Communism," but like neither of these others it is understood on all sides as a term of depreciation. That defeatism is, in any case, an indefensible and pernicious attitude may be questioned. But it seems odd and silly to mark Anderson as a defeatist when he is not so.

"Defeatism," as currently used, means rather the want of some immediate and current Problem: the condition of the anthracite workers in Pennsylvania or the sad state of the oppressed in Italy, the plight of the cab drivers in New York City or of the Negroes under the thumbs of Southern capitalists.

But it is only by very blind reading that Anderson can be called a defeatist in any more reasonable sense. Mr. Wilson chooses to believe that Rudolph, in *The Masque of Kings*, abandons his world-building revolutionary plans because he learns that the Vetsera was hired to spy upon him. Mr. Wilson fur-

ther marks the bathos of Oparre's tender farewell to her husband after he has slid unwillingly for an instant into his scheming elders' attitude and after her own magnificent denunciation of their hypocrisies. Mr. Wilson points with glee to the retreat of the idealistic, "progress"-defying Van Dorn from his mountain top when \$50,000 is forthcoming for its purchase.

It might be pointed out that so zealous—and I must apologize for the word, here to be taken in its customarily vague sense—so zealous a Communist as Clifford Odets, after three acts of talk, "about it and about," kills off a Marxist grandpa to send his daughter to Bermuda with \$5,000—the old gentleman's insurance money which, by his own creed, might better have been devoted to the Cause. Possibly Mr. Anderson's ante is too high.

If Anderson is to be called a defeatist at all, he is most assailable with regard to this conclusion for *High Tor*. But Van's backsliding is not nearly so complete as Mr. Wilson implies; for the sum of his reason for this retreat is contained clearly enough in the last lines of the play:

Nothing is made by men
But makes, in the end, good ruins.

This is defeatism of a sort, if an ism must be attached to it; but if so, it must be granted true. Even here, however, the idealist has not given up; he has simply moved on, sure that in the long run he is right.

If the conclusion of *High Tor* is, in this sense, negative, those to the other plays are by no means so. Rudolph does not kill himself whimsically; the revelation is only a final straw. Rudolph destroys himself not because he is a disappointed idealist, but because he is too much a realist. His revolutionary world-plan is ideal; but he kills himself not because the plan is impossible of realization, but because he himself is, to his own knowledge, too weak to carry it out. In the clash with his father he is shown by the Emperor to be as incapable of ruling as he wishes as Richard of Bordeaux was incapable of ruling at all properly until it was too late to rule. Rudolph's action is not retreat but self-realization and courageous advance.

That Oparre, dying, can murmur a loving word to her husband, does not in the least negate the terrifying force of her denunciation. His defection has been only momentary, if critical, and his repentance is honest and desperate enough, God knows. To permit her this comfort is only to relieve in part her terrible desolation and the loneliness in which she has been enveloped. This is kindness not weak but merely reasonable. It is a portion of that third dimension which our purposeful playwrights neglect and even refuse.

Anderson has been accused, by some of these same critics, of an earlier crime: the composition of "sterile historical plays"—a piece of nonsense which, in the recent happy favour of *Richard II*, it seems scarcely necessary to deny. For *Richard II* (and *Hamlet*, and the others) are all, by the same token, "sterile"; sterile because, again, they do not come to grips with immediate Issues. Uneven as *Elizabeth the Queen* seems after a decade, it will be immediate half a hundred years hence when the conditions in *Stevedore*, like those in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, are coloured quaintly, and the extremity of their bias seems absurdly broad. For Anderson, while his subjects in these early verse plays may be dead queens, is writing still of human beings facing a life as real and as fraught with sorrows and individual conflicts as existence today—or tomorrow. Human nature is an essential and a constant basis of art and a subject for thoughtful reconsideration; political theories crowd dusty stack shelves.

III

Mr. Wilson and other critics, in linking the names of Anderson and Shakespeare, insistently note one of two things: that Anderson's verse is modelled slavishly on Elizabethan measures; that Anderson's verse is modelled on no measures at all and is, indeed, not verse. Each of these assertions has some strain of truth. Anderson's verse has a predominant iambic stress and at the same time only a few successive lines fall into the pentameter form. But even Mr. Eastman, while protesting against what he sees as stiff "set speeches" from time to time, sees that Anderson has made an uncommonly skillful and heightening use of colloquial language.

Of the other contemporary experimenters in verse-drama, Archibald MacLeish and Clemence Dane both insist upon the importance of current English and especially of current measures. Both note that the rhythms are quick, clipped, staccato, rather harsh than not, and above all, rapid. Miss Dane, in her curious play *Come of Age*, attempted (without success in the general opinion which, I confess, I share) to use this colloquial language poetically. But her verse plays a jackanapes in its extraordinary bouncing time and in its jingling rhymes, conscious and effortful rather than successful in conveying mood—or even meaning, which they tend to distort. Mr. MacLeish experimented with little more success in *Panic*, using a five-stress line with unlimited syllables. Like *Come of Age*, *Panic* is cacophonous and, if honest, laborious. In *The Fall of the City* MacLeish's verse is smooth, more forceful but in great degree commonplace, relying for its effect more on combinations of sound than a sustained sense.

Anderson, using a five-stress line but confining it in general to ten syllables, has still been able to catch the swing of colloquial speech and, without losing its own quality, to make it acceptable verse. Recall a conversation between Trock and his lieutenant, Shadow, in which, while there is no heightening of language, the verse qualities are clear and firm:

TROCK. Read the morning papers.

It says Judge Gaunt's gone off his nut. He's got that damn trial on his mind, and been going round proving to everybody he was right all the time and the radicals were guilty—stopping people in the streets to prove it—and now he's nuts entirely and nobody knows where he is.

GARTH: Why don't they know?

TROCK. Because he's on the loose somewhere! They've got the police of three cities looking for him.

GARTH: Judge Gaunt?

TROCK. Yes. Judge Gaunt.

SHADOW. Why should that worry you?

He's crazy, ain't he? And even if he wasn't he's arguing on your side. You're jittery, chief. God, all the judges are looney. You've got the jitters, and you'll damn well give yourself away some time peeing yourself in public.

(TROCK half turns toward Shadow in anger)

Don't jump the gun now,
I've got pockets in my clothes, too.

Scanned, this has a notable regularity; yet the words are

neither strained nor set out of a reasonable and vivid sequence. At the same time this verse is capable of sustaining the snarling cant-language of the gutter and the rising grandeur of the final threnody.

To those critics who insist (with some reason) that Anderson is long-winded it may be said that no play, in all probability, has ever come from a playwright to an audience without alterations, additions and subtractions. Cutting is always possible. But I suspect that these same critics (who begin, with the appearance of *The Star-Wagon* this season, to remember with faint contempt "the plays in iambic pentameter or one of the other poetic moods") are too used to our semi-demi-realistic prose. They have not yet accustomed themselves to a theatre enriched by the words which they would use if they were closer to hand.

And while the matter is debatable, remaining finally in the hands of the players, I am willing to contend that even the "set speeches" which Mr. Eastman finds are the stuff of the living theatre and not of the library. In *Dead End* Baby-Face Martin dies in a hail of bullets and his obituary is a kick and a lugging offstage while a curious crowd peers at him. In *Winter* set Mio and Miriamne die similarly, but their obituary (if Mr. Eastman will have it so) is a set piece—a piece with which, I think, we would not care to dispense in favour, say, of a curious crowd and the little black book of the investigator:

On this star
In this hard star-adventure, knowing not
what the fires mean to right and left, nor whether
a meaning was intended or presumed,
man can stand up and look out blind, and say:
in all these turning lights I find no clue,
only a masterless night, and in my blood
no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,
yet is my heart a cry toward something dim
in distance, which is higher than I am
and makes me emperor of the endless dark
even in seeking!

Certainly this is a defiance to the critics who assert that verse is a concern of past ages, not properly to be roused off the shelves and set upon the stage. While it can affect the thoughtful in dramatic terms, verse will have its place in the theatre—a place which we cannot reasonably deny it.

APPENDIX:

THE CASE AGAINST MAXWELL ANDERSON

A selection.

[Because this paper is less a sustained, general evaluation of Anderson's plays in verse than a series of comments upon the justice of their critics, a list of the latter is appended for the reader. Some of the critics assail Anderson's verse, some his philosophy. But as critics distinguish themselves today as, on the one hand, critics, and on the other, Champions of the Cause, the list should be self-explanatory.]

Eastman, Max, "By the Eternal," *Stage*, April 1937.

Fadiman, Clifton, "Comedy with Errors," *Stage*, March 1937.

Ferguson, Otis, "East River Hamlet," *New Republic*, 13 January 1937; 27 January 1937. (Mr. Ferguson's objection here to Mio's language as palpably not that of a "road-boy" is again representative of the insistently realistic point of view and its self-imposed limitations; it is an objection quite as sensible as another might be to the effect that Othello is less real because as an untutored mercenary, "rude" as he describes his own speech, he contrives some fairly effective measures.)

Gassner, John W., "The Theatre at the Crossroads," *One-Act Play Magazine*, July 1937.

Gibbs, Wolcott, "The Theatre," *New Yorker*, 5 October 1935.

Nathan, George Jean, "Theatre," *Scribner's*, June 1937.

Seldes, Gilbert, "Screen & Radio," *Scribner's*, March 1937.

Wilson, Edmund, "Prize-Winning Blank Verse," *New Republic*, 23 June 1937.

Young, Stark, "Poetic Chances," *New Republic*, 6 November 1935.

Young, Stark, "High Tor and Highty-Tighty," *New Republic*, 3 February 1937.

A WESTERN FOLKTALE

DESMOND POWELL

The story of the horned snake occurs in several forms. The one I like best was told me in the Sierra Ancha Mountains of Arizona in the spring of 1925 by a fine old folklorist named Dad Carr.¹ According to his version the hero of the tale was a Texan named Singleshot Johnson. No Paul Bunyan, this Singleshot was nonetheless a remarkable fellow. It was he who used to chase outlaws into Magnetic Gulch, where he caught them with ease because their ponies' shoes stuck to the rock; it was he who found and lost the only diamond mine in New Mexico; it was he who awoke in a schoolyard one morning and, still dazed from the bibulations² of the night before, attacked the schoolhouse with his prospector's hammer, to discover to his amazement that it was built of high-grade ore. It was with some of the money that he got out of refining the school (he lost most of it betting on frog races) that he built in Pleasant Valley a cabin that was the envy of all his friends. But the cabin, like the diamond mine, is another story.

One morning as Singleshot was hoeing in his corn patch, he was startled by a thin whine that few men hear and live to tell about. Glancing up he saw a horned snake coming straight at him down the hill. The method of attack of the horned snake is unparalleled in nature: he seizes his tail in his mouth and rolls toward his victim, gaining speed with every revolution of his whiplike body. At a distance of about twelve and a half feet he straightens out like an arrow and an eyeflash later plunges his poisonous horn into his prey. Singleshot was too quick for this one. Using the hoe as a pole he vaulted just out of danger. The snake hit the hoe handle and buried his horn in it. Before he could get it out, Singleshot had dispatched him with the customary single shot from his forty-four.

It was no time at all before the hoe handle started to swell. The venom of the snake was so powerful that soon the handle was as big as a sapling, and then as big as an aspen,

¹ Hubert C. Heffner, now Professor of Dramatic Literature at Stanford, heard the story at the same time.

² I preserve this word from the original account.

and then as big as a young Douglas fir. When it finally stopped swelling, Singleshot was able to saw enough boards out of it to build him a fair-sized smokehouse. When he tasted the first ham cured in that smokehouse, he uttered a cry of delight and invited the whole valley to eat ham with him. Everybody came, and they all agreed that the venom in which the house was saturated had a miraculous effect on the meat. Old Andy Harcum said it was like hog crossed with wood pigeon; Dogface Decker said that it was more like nightingale, only with a better aroma; but Doc Schmuck held that their comparisons were unjust and that one would have to go to the phoenix or the gumperz, both of which he had tasted, to do justice to this ham. Anyway they all agreed there was never anything like it. The fame of that ham spread far and wide, and eventually a restaurant man travelled all the way from San Francisco to sample it. He made a deal on the spot to buy at a fabulous price all the ham Singleshot could cure.

It looked as if Singleshot's fortune was made again; but he had a sheer genius for losing fortunes. He lost this one by offending Doc Schmuck. The Doc was very touchy about the dignity of his profession, and one way in which he upheld it was to wear a high plug hat on all occasions. Some said he slept in it. It so happened that he was crossing the street one day when somebody in the Red Eye Saloon expressed doubt that Wild Bill Hickok, or any other man, could hit a telegraph wire with a six gun. "Gentlemen," said Singleshot Johnson, who happened to be present, "I am sure that Mr. Hickok could do it. There are no telegraph wires here, but I shall be happy to give a demonstration on some other object. For example, there is Doc Schmuck's hat. I shall just plow a furrow in the dust on the top of that hat without injuring it in the slightest." And he did so.³

The crowd was properly impressed, but Doc Schmuck was furious. "Endangering the life of the only medical man in the valley, and the best medical man west of the Rhine," he shouted in an accent that I shall not attempt to reproduce here. "Also he might have spoiled my hat," he added. The Doc was

³ It is a tribute to Dad Carr's passion for veracity that he doubted this part of the story. "I saw Singleshot take a shot at a rabbit once," he said, "and he missed!"

usually broadminded, but the more he brooded over this affront the madder he got. So one night he sneaked over to Singleshot's place and poured over the smokehouse a full bottle of his famous liniment which, as he always boasted, would wizen a wen or take the pride out of a senator. When Singleshot arose next morning all he saw where the smokehouse had been was a pile of matchsticks. The Doc's liniment had taken all the swelling out.

Singleshot was crushed, but he took it like a man. And it wasn't long before the Doc was pretty contrite, too. You see he had forgotten that by getting even he had cut himself off forever from any more of that miraculous ham. The moral of the story is, of course, that it's better to think of your stomach than of your dignity.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CENTER

JOHN VAN MALE

The Bibliographical Center is a central agency in which fifteen institutions cooperate to give each institution a more adequate supply of materials for research. The plan for such a central agency was conceived by Dr. Malcolm Glenn Wyer, of Denver, and its possibilities so impressed the Carnegie Corporation that this foundation gave the fund to establish it. The Works Progress Administration has furnished the clerical and skilled help necessary for preparing the union catalog and for handling the clearing house service for inter-library loans. It is expected that in the future the cooperating institutions will take up the burden of financial support. Whether or not that is done, the members of the Colorado-Wyoming Academy of Letters have, in the meantime, the use of the Bibliographical Center's services. These are obtained by applying to the librarian of one's own college or university.

The Center is a cooperative enterprise designed to facilitate graduate study, research, and other scholarly efforts in the Mountain States. It has, in a sense, given each student and professor the entire body of available printed materials to work with. It has not yet been used to any extent to build the library resources of the Mountain States along the lines of a concerted plan, but it can be used for this purpose and doubtless will be within the next few years. The purpose of this brief summary of its methods and aims is to acquaint the members of the Colorado-Wyoming Academy of Letters with the ways in which the Center can aid them professionally. Nowhere else in the United States is there a central library agency quite like it. The Center will help overcome the drawbacks to research and scholarly competence which the remoteness and comparative poverty of this region have hitherto caused.

The college libraries of the Mountain States (Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico) compare favorably with the libraries of Harvard, Yale and Columbia as they were seventy or eighty years ago. (In 1876 the Harvard library had 228,000 volumes.) Today the combined college libraries of the Mountain States total less than one-third the number of volumes in

the Harvard Library alone; the total book resources of Rocky Mountain colleges about equal the book stock of the University of Illinois. If the instruction offered in the colleges and universities of the Mountain States were on a level with that of Harvard of nearly a century ago, the book stocks of the college libraries might be counted adequate. Times have changed, however, with the result that the college libraries, though they may be adequate for junior college students, are patently inadequate for senior and graduate students and for the faculties. The Mountain States' libraries are particularly weak in books and serials in foreign languages except in a few scientific fields, remarkably weak in foreign language publications in the social sciences and the humanities. If the college and university libraries in these four states were to be combined, therefore, we should have a book stock of about the size, but of nowhere near the variety and value, of one of the larger state universities of the Middle West or the Pacific Coast.

Obviously then, if the more advanced students are to have access to a selection of books of the same range and quality as the students at the Universities of Minnesota or California, and if the faculty man is to keep abreast of the literature of his field and the developments in his own specialty, the combined library resources of the Rocky Mountain region will be no more than enough. Combining these libraries would be exceedingly awkward and expensive even if it were politically possible. If the books are left on their home shelves, but if their exact location is known, and if they may be borrowed when needed by students and professors in other institutions, the book stocks may be said to be combined. A central directory recording the local address of each book can thus take the place of a combined library. Such a directory, called a union catalog (though it is actually a check-list, not a true catalog), has been compiled for college libraries in Colorado, and is being enlarged to include other libraries in the Mountain States. The use of this union catalog in forwarding loan requests to libraries owning the desired book is now the principal function of the Bibliographical Center.

The Bibliographical Center's union catalog is both less and more than a combined catalog of Colorado college libraries. It is more than a record of what these libraries own, since it

contains a depository set of Library of Congress cards and the cards of the John Crerar library. With the help of these cards, of bibliographies denoting library locations of published catalogs of special collections in libraries throughout the country, and of other union catalogs, the Center can forward any loan request to libraries outside the Rocky Mountain area which it has found to possess the volume asked for. Usually in about a week after the request is made, the book arrives. The union catalog is less than a combined catalog since it has no cards for subjects, titles, translators, editors, co-authors or sponsoring organizations; only the main-entry card, the author card, has been copied; technical difficulties prevent the copying of cards of other varieties for the union catalog.

The absence of subject, title and other cards from the union catalog would severely limit its usefulness, were the lack not filled by the bibliographical collection of the Center. Bibliographies are more than a substitute for subject cards, of course, since bibliographies record all of the better books on a subject and not merely those which happen to be in one library. Bibliographies may also be used in correcting the large number of faulty references which the Bibliographical Center receives every day. The collection fills a serious gap, moreover, in the library resources of the region, since the libraries of the Mountain States are notably weak in this field of literature. By finding out where a bibliography not in this collection is located, the Center can consult the work by mail; the Center's reference collection is, therefore, the combined bibliographical resources of the region. To the limit of the abilities and sagacity of its staff, the Center can supplement local reference-staff service, just as the clearing of inter-library loans supplements local book stocks to nearly the bounds of printed materials.

It is plain that the founding of the Bibliographical Center has, by providing a cooperative central service, enlarged the individual college libraries of the Mountain States to roughly the equivalent of the larger university libraries in more favored regions. The book may not be on the shelves, but it will come to hand in a few days; the bibliographical guides may not all be consulted immediately, but they can be, with a little delay.

Library materials are of two sorts: (1) those which are

needed constantly, or frequently, as materials for instruction; and (2) those which are the raw materials of research. Library materials of the first class include encyclopaedias and other reference works, the serials which survey and summarize the sciences or which publish current opinions in the social sciences, or which serve as publishing media for current production in the field of letters, and those standard works to which professors refer their classes for collateral reading. No library can do without library materials of this class, and on the whole, the college libraries of the Mountain States are fairly well provided with them. The second class includes all other printed materials which are used by those not receiving instruction, that is to say, by those who are engaged in the study of some specific topic. The works of this second class are not the general summaries and surveys found in the first class. Since they are not needed for the everyday business of the college or university they are not purchased except when the college has more than enough money for materials of the first class. In regions of limited tax support, the purchases of materials of the second class are bound to be infrequent and small.

The Bibliographical Center is developing plans for coordinating purchases by the cooperating libraries. Again, as in the case of the use of book stocks, central purchasing would probably prove awkward if not impossible. However, if all the book orders from the cooperating institutions were to clear through the Bibliographical Center the individual college could be warned when it was purchasing a book already in the region, and then, if it wished, it could purchase another book not in the region. No central agency could be trusted to decide how much an individual library needed any one book, but the librarian and the faculty member could decide whether the book would be used so often that it had to be in the library, or whether it would be used so seldom that it might as well be borrowed when needed. The Bibliographical Center might also help those institutions interested in building up the resources of the region in, say, South American literature, by checking bibliographies with the union catalog to discover which books were not to be found in the region and should therefore be purchased. This has not yet been done, but it is one of the possibilities which indicate the value of a central library agency for a region so poorly provided with books as the Rocky Mountain area.

BOOK REVIEW

College and University Library Buildings, by Edna Ruth Hanley. Chicago, 1939. 152 pp.

Resolved, that, . . . the time has come for a radical modification of the prevailing typical style of library building, and the adoption of a style of construction better suited to economy and practical utility.

The foregoing resolution of the American Library Association shows that librarians have not been unaware of the inadequacy of their buildings and that they are striving mightily to make libraries better places in which to consult books. The document I have quoted is not sufficient reason, however, for scholars to rejoice, for the truth is that the resolution was passed in 1881. And the truth is that since then there has been little progress in the design of libraries. Anyone who has visited a few college campuses knows this to be true for some localities; anyone who reads this recent publication of the American Library Association will realize that it is true for the whole country.

Here is a rare collection of forty-two Romanesque, Greek, Colonial, Moorish, and Gothic buildings representing the cultural preferences of institutions from Decatur, Georgia, to Ann Arbor, Michigan; from Eugene, Oregon, to Hanover, New Hampshire. They were built in the period 1917-1938 at costs ranging from \$60,000 to \$1,200,000. The exteriors of these buildings remind one of churches, temples, town-halls, bath-houses, and mausoleums. That a great deal of money has been wasted on these quaint facades few will deny; they were, perhaps, inevitable. As long as colleges and universities keep their eyes glued on the past, architects have no choice other than to make buildings look like bits of Athens (Greece) or Rome (Italy).

The inside of these buildings is, for the greater part, just as disappointing as the outside. Students, one notes, have to climb at least one, frequently two, long flights of stairs to get to the card catalog and delivery desk. (Dartmouth is the only institution represented which has put these facilities on the level of the ground.) Coat rooms in most of the buildings are

not convenient; toilets are usually treated as necessary evils and are relegated to odd corners of the basement. The best, most useful locations in these buildings are frequently taken up by the offices of the librarians, the order clerks, and the catalogers. Most of these libraries have so many columns at the entrance that doors are hopelessly narrow, making Indian file necessary for students desiring to enter the building. The doorway of the University of Southern California is the only one through which three students could enter at the same time that two were coming out.

Miss Hanley's Book proves conclusively that much has yet to be done to make college libraries efficient. The odd, distorted outside we shall probably always have with us, or shall have until the disciples of Walter Gropius, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Richard Neutra displace the Beaux Arts Boys. The inside will be bad as long as librarians try to make their worldly buildings into Library Heaven, where, I am told, every book is in its proper place on the shelf and is never disturbed. The inside will be bad as long as architects and librarians overlook the function of a library — to make books readily available, patrons comfortable, and reading a pleasure. As soon as this is realized every pair of stairs will be seen in its true light, as an impediment to the accessibility of books; every ornate rotunda will be seen as wasted reading space; every hidden coat room as a request that the student do his reading seated in a wet overcoat. As soon as architects try to make a library functional they won't care particularly whether the librarian has the best location in the building, so engrossed will they become in finding the best rooms for the students.

Surely it is not asking too much to have a library which can be entered (after going up not more than one step) through wide doors in any one of the four sides of the building. Perhaps a library must have only one exit: then one-way turnstiles at three entrances solve that problem. It should not be impossible for a student to put his hat, coat, and rubbers away immediately and get to the card catalog in a dozen steps. Reading rooms should be nearby. A student who desires to smoke should not be relegated to the front steps or a damp, tile-covered room in the basement. There should be toilets in the stacks for graduate students. In this ideal library the ex-

hibits of Alaskan meteorites have been dumped in the coalbin; the plaster-casts of statues from Samothrace (or anywhere else) have been thrown out in the back yard; the coin collection has been sent over to the Treasurer's office.

Confronted with the plans and pictures of fifteen million dollars' worth of buildings admirably suited for dead-letter offices Miss Hanley has borne up courageously. She points out some of the worst mistakes in planning, yet manages to say something kind about each exhibit. There is an interesting introduction to the book, explaining the operation of a library, and there is a complete table of statistics at the end. The names of the architects who designed these buildings are given on pp. 136-9; this should prove to be a most useful addition to the book.

In conclusion, "the time has come for a radical modification of the prevailing typical style of library building, and the adoption of a style of construction better suited to economy and practical utility."

Colorado College

George S. McCue



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